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Love *and* Religion

Demonstrated in the

Martyrdom

O'F

THEODORA,

AND OF

DIDYMUS.

By the Late Honourable *Robert Boyle* Esq;
Fellow of the Royal Society.

The Second Edition Corrected.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *John Taylor* at the
Ship, in *St. Paul's Church-*
Yard, M D C C I I I.



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SUCH An
ACCOUNT
Of the following
BOOK.

Sent with it to a
FRIEND;

As may serve instead of a

PREFACE.

TO convince you, Sir, how much more I am concern'd to have you think, I can Obey well, than Write well; I venture to send you the *Account* (as imperfect and unpolish'd as it is) that you are pleas'd to command *Of the last Hours of Theodora*. But I must beg your leave to accompany it with another *Account* (though but a short one) how I came to meddle with

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this Subject; and why what I present you about it, is so much Maim'd, and has no more Uniformity.

Having had occasion many years ago to turn over a Martyrology, and some other Books, that related to the Sufferings of the Primitive Christians; I chanc'd to light on those of a Virgin, who, though (to my wonder) she was left unnam'd by the other Writers that mention'd her, seem'd plainly to be the same, that is by one of them expressly call'd *Theodora*: I own, I was not a little affected, at the reading of such moving and uncommon adventures as hers: and finding her story to be related, by the Author that nam'd both her and her Lover, not only very succinctly and imperfectly, but very dully too; I found my self tempted so to enlarge this Story, as that it might be contriv'd into a somewhat voluminous Romance: But
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upon second thoughts, it appeared incongruous to turn a Martyr into a Nymph or an Amazon: And I consider'd too, that (to omit what else might be objected against that sort of Composures) *as* true Pearls are Cordials and Antidotes, which counterfeit ones, how fine soever they may appear, are not; *so* True Examples do arm and fortify the mind far more efficaciously, than Imaginary or Fictitious ones can do; and the fabulous labours of *Hercules*, and Exploits of *Arthur* of *Britain*, will never make men aspire to Heroick Vertue half so powerfully, as the real Examples of Courage and Gallantry afforded by *Jonathan Cæsar*, or the *Black Prince*. But yet, thinking it great pity, that so shining a Vertue as *Theodora's* should prove Exemplary, but to her own time, and to one City; and remembering, that soon after the Age which she Ennobl'd, it was counted among the Primitive Christians an act of Piety, to build

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fair Monuments, upon the formerly abject Graves of the Martyrs; to repay, by Honours done to their Memories, the Indignities and Disgraces they had suffer'd in their Persons; I thought fit to try, if I could rescue from more unskilful Hands than even mine, a story that abundantly deserv'd to be well told.

But upon further thoughts, I soon foresaw, that this Task was not more worthy to be undertaken, than it would prove difficult to be well perform'd: For the Martyrologist having allow'd scarce one whole Page, to a Relation, that perhaps merited a Volum, had left so many Chasms, and so many necessary things unmentioned, that I plainly perceiv'd I wanted a far greater number of Circumstances, than that he had supply'd me with to make up so main'd a story tolerably compleat. And as the Relation deny'd me matter enough to work upon

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upon, so the nature of the Subject refus'd most of those Imbellishments which in other Themes, where young Gallants and fair Ladies are the chief Actors, are wont to supply the deficiencies of the matter. Besides, my task was not near so easie as it would have been, if I had been only to recite the Intrigues of an Amour, with the liberty to feign surprizing adventures, to adorn the Historical part of the account, and to make a Lover speak as Passionately as I could, and his Mistress as Kindly as the indulgentest Laws of decency would permit. But I was to introduce a Christian and pious Lover, who was to contain the expressions of his Flame within the narrow bounds of his Religion; and a Virgin, who, being as modest and discreet as handsom, and as devout as either, was to own an high Esteem for an excellent Lover, and an uncommon Gratitude to a transcendent Benefactor,

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factor, without intrenching either upon her Vertue, or her Reservedness. And I perceiv'd the difficulty of my Task would be encreas'd, by that of Reconciling *Theodora's* Scrupulousness to the humours of some young Persons of Quality of either Sex, who were earnest to engage my Pen on this occasion, and would expect that I should make *Theodora* more kind, than I thought her great Piety and strict Modesty would permit. But for all this ; the esteem I had for the fair Myrtyrs Excellencies, and the compliance I had for those that desir'd to receive an account of so rare a Persons actions and Sufferings, made me resolve to try what I could do. Which I adventur'd upon with the less Reluctancy, because, though I esteem'd it a kind of Profaneness, to transform a piece of Martyrology into a Romance ; yet I thought it allowable enough, where a Narrative was written so concisely, and
left

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lest so imperfect, as that I had to descant upon ; to make such supplements of Circumstances, as were not improbable in the nature of the thing, and were little less than necessary to the clearness and entireness of the Story, and the decent connection of the parts it should consist of. I suppos'd too, that I needed not scruple, to lend Speeches to the Persons I brought upon the Stage, provided they were suitable to the Speakers, and Occasions ; since I was warranted by the Examples of *Livy*, *Plutarch*, and other Grave and Judicious Historians, who make no scruple to give us set Orations, of their own framing, and sometimes put them into the mouths of Generals at the head of their Armies, just going to give Battel: though at such times the hurry and distraction that both they and their Auditors must be in, must make it very unlikely, either that they should make elaborate Speeches, or their Hearers

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mind and remember them well enough to repeat them to the Historians.

Encourag'd by these Liberties, which I thought I might justly allow my self: I drew up, as well as I could, what you have been told I wrote about *Theodora*, This I thought fit to divide into two parts; in the first whereof (which was less remote from being Romantick) I gave somewhat at large the Characters of them both. I mention'd the rise and progress of *Didymus's* Love; the degeneracy of the then Christians, which provok'd Divine Providence, to expose them to a very Bloody Persecution! I declar'd, how *Theodora* being involv'd in it, was brought before the *President of Antioch*; how she resolutely own'd her Religion before him, answer'd His Arguments, and resisted both his Promises, and his Menaces; how thereupon the Judge doom'd her either to Sacrifice,

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fice, or to be prostituted in the publick *Stews*. How she, after an eager Debate in her own mind, refusing to offer sacrifice, was (notwithstanding her silence) led away to the infamous place; how being shut up there alone in a Room, she employ'd the little time, that was granted her to consider whether she would yet burn Incense to the *Roman* Idols, in fervent Prayer to the true God, for a rescue of her Purity, not her Life; in order whereunto, she design'd and hop'd by Resistance and Contumelies to provoke her first Assailant, to become her Murderer, rather than her Ravisher.

These were the chief Contents of the first Book, Those of the second, were more Historical; and consisted of an account of the last hours of her Life, and particularly of those Sufferings that ended in her and *Didymus's* glorious Martyrdom. This piece having been
perus'd

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perus'd by those for whose sake I wrote it; was so fortunate, that it having, without my leave, been ventur'd into several hands, as a Book of a nameless and unknown Author, it was lucky enough to be, by some indulgent Readers, attributed to One, and by some to Another, of the two Persons, that were at that time counted the best writers of disguis'd Histories. But among the many Hands it pass'd through, it seems it fell into some, out of which a great part of the loose sheets (which were not bound in a Book, but only tack'd together) were not to be retriev'd: whether it were by the negligence, or the contempt, that some had of so unpolish'd a Work; or whether there were some fatality in the Business, that *Theodoras* Sufferings should outlive her, and her Story be as ill us'd as her Person had been. This loss (if it can deserve that name) I did not much regret: Since I intend-
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ed not to make the lost Papers publick, and had receiv'd much greater approbation and thanks than they merited, from the particular Persons they were design'd for. But after I had for many years worn out, not only the sense, but the memory of this loss : It was made more troublesom to me, than ever it was at first, by the earnest solicitations of some eminent Persons, that had a great power over me, and some of them the repute of great Judges of this kind of Composures. For having seen several Sheets, that I accidentally lighted on, in tumbling over some long neglected Papers ; they oblig'd me to cause those old rude sheets to be transcrib'd. And tho' almost all the first Book was wanting (upon which account, I could not be remov'd from my Resolution not to trouble my self about it) yet there was so much of the Second Book, but in parts no way Coherent, little by little retriev'd,

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triv'd, that a pretence was afforded to press me to repair those Breaches, and restore out of my memory, or otherwise, a piece, which they would needs perswade me might do some good, by rendering Vertue Amiable, and recommending Piety to a sort of Readers, that are much more affected by shining Examples, and poetical Expressions, than by dry Precepts, and grave Discourses.

If some of your more scrupulous Friends shall object, that I have mention'd *Theodora's* Beauty more often and advantagiously, and represented her Lovers Passion more Pathetically, than the subject of the story exacted, and the truth requir'd in History would warrant: I shall not altogether deny the charge: Being rather content to have it thought, that a youthful and heated fancy transported my Pen, somewhat beyond the narrow

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narrow bounds of History, than that so Pious a person as *Didymus* did not keep both his Flame, and the Expressions of it, within the limits of Reason and Religion. But though I pretend not to justify, all that has been said in the strain of an Encomiast, or a Lover, yet I hop'd that I may much Extenuate, if not Excuse it, by representing such things as these.

That I have been careful, that *Theodora* should not be made to do, or say, any thing, that, the great Obligations she had to her Rescuer consider'd, do intrench either upon her Piety, or her Virtue, or so much as upon her Reserv'dness.

That as for *Didymus* ; I might say, that probably he thought, those Celebrations that would have been Flattery to another Lady, were but Justice to a Person so Extraordinary, and so accomplish'd
as

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as his Mistress; and that he thought it allowable, not to suppress the chaste effects of a Passion, that has not only been incident to Heroes, but perhaps help'd to make them such. But I will rather say, that those only are like to find much fault with his Expressions, *who* consider not how free they are from any degree of Prophane-ness or Immodesty: And *who* are not accustomed to the reading of Stories, where Lovers are introduc'd, and made to Praise and Complement in a far more Bold and Romantick way, than I allowed my self in the following Paper. In which, all the Defe-
rence wherewith *Irene* as well as *Didymus* treat *Theodora* may be accounted for by this; That I remember'd to have, in some Author or other, found Mention made of a Person about *Dioclesi-an's* time, Whom I took for our Martyr, that was intimated to be of high Quality, if not a *Princess*,
which

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which Title I had without scruple given Her, If I had been half as sure that she Was a *Princess*, as that she Deserv'd to be One.

That perhaps I was not unwilling, both to shew the Persons I wrote for, that One might have glittering *Ideas* of Beauty, without being dazl'd by them; and also to convince them, that high Complements and passionate Expressions, are no certain Marks of His being really *Smitten* (to speak in a Lovers Phrase) that can Imploy them; since I retain'd my wonted freedom of mind, while I was Writing; and presented them by the mouth of *Didymus*, but what Fancy, not Passion indited.

And lastly, I was induc'd to allow my self a more fashionable Stile, than would perhaps be suitable to a meer Sermon, or Book of Divinity, because I fear'd, that the Youthful Persons of Quality of both Sexes,

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Sexes, that I was chiefly to regard, would scarce be sufficiently affected by unfortunate Vertue, if the interweaving of passages relating to Beauty and Love, did not help to make the Tragical story, Delightful, and the Excellent Sufferers Piety, Amiable.

If it be objected, that in some of the discourses of the two Martyrs, there are Passages that argue more Knowledge, than is likely to have been found in Lay Persons no Elder than they. I answer, that such Discourses indeed were somewhat strange, if they were ascrib'd to a young Gallant, and a younger Lady, of Our degenerate Times; wherein so many Persons of that sort, make Diversion their grand Business; and, having as little Leisure as Concern to mind any thing, but their Pleasures and petty Interests, think it their Priviledge to know little of Religion, and leave to meaner People the study of things

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things Serious and Useful. But, *though* among this sort of Persons, it were so difficult to find many that would Emulate such Knowledge and Vertue as shin'd in *Theodora*, that I fear they would not so much as believe them; *yet* among better qualify'd Judges, the lately propos'd objection will be of no great force, if it be consider'd that *Didymus* and *Theodora* liv'd in the Primitive and devout times of the Church, and in the *Roman Empire*, when the Christian Religion was as diligently Taught by Excellent Divines, as frequently Oppos'd by Arguments, and violently assaulted by Persecutions. Upon which scores, the zealous Candidates of Martyrdom, many of which obtain'd the Crown of it, even in their greener Age, were early and skilfully instructed in the truths of their own Religion, and furnish'd with good Arguments, both to Defend It, and Confute the Erroneous Opinions and Impious Worshipships

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ships of their Heathen Adversaries. Nor is it any wonder, that they should think, That Religion worth Studying, that they thought worth Dying for. I will not here examine, whether the Ignorance wont to be imputed to Women, be Their fault, or that of their Accusers, and whether it is any natural want of Capacity, or rather want of Instruction, that keeps most of them from Knowledge, though This regards not Sexes. But without inquiry, whether it be not our Interest, or our Envy, that Makes Women what we are wont to decry them for Being; I shall not scruple to own, that I have sometimes had the honour to converse with Ladies; that convinc'd me, That, to attain to a great Proficiency in Knowledge, 'tis not necessary to be a Doctor of Divinity, or so much as a Man, since they discours'd of Divine things, with no less Wit than Piety. And to return to our Martyr, if we
may

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may judge by the Effects, we may reasonably suppose, that our Virgins Parents not only thought it their Duty, but took much Pleasure, to Cultivate so excellent and promising a Subject as their fair Daughter. Since great advantages of Nature and general Grace should rather Invite, than Excuse, Improvements by Education; as even the *Garden of Eden*, though an admirably fertile Soil, and planted by God's own Hands, was not so left to it self, but that *Adam* was appointed to dress it, and to keep it. And if the Discourses of our Martyrs are sometimes less short than they might have been made; I hope it may be some excuse, that I was not unwilling, to lay hold now and then of the Rises afforded me by some occasions, to shew, that Romantick Subjects are not, as too many Persons of Quality think them, the Only ones, that may be treated of in a Gentleman-like stile; and that even
some

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cast Himself into the Sea, yet solicited Others to cast him (and that having first bound him) I must leave You to judge,

I freely confess, Sir, that, if the following Piece had been written by One, that I were fond of Censuring, I could my self find enough in it to Criticize upon ; and should object against it, besides the want of Uniformity throughout, That if judg'd of by the strict Rules of Art, it ought to pass for an Irregular Piece. And therefore I shall not wonder, if Nicer Criticks, and more vers'd in Exquisite Composures than I pretend to be, shall find fault with this Artless one of mine. But the reception that the following Papers met with, from the Persons for whom they were chiefly written, affords me the Consolation derivable from the ingenious saying of that excellent Wit, who declar'd, *He had rather the Dishes serv'd*

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serv'd up at his Treat, should please the Guests, than the Cooks. And I might say too, that some of the Passages that may meet with Censure, would perhaps escape it; if in writing this Book many years ago, I had not had some Aims, that I then thought more fit to be Pursu'd, than I now do to be Declar'd. Yet I will not here dissemble, that I know it may be thought by some, that this Paper should have consisted less of Conversations, and more of Narratives. But I chose the way of Writing I have employ'd, *partly* because the Authors I met with furnish'd me with so very few matters of Fact, that if I would have confin'd my self to Relations; I must have compriz'd this piece in a very few Pages, and have finish'd it presently after I had begun it: And *partly* too, (and indeed much more) because (as I lately began to intimate) my chief design was not so much, to

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perform the Office of a meer Historian, as to take Rises from the several Circumstances I should relate, to convey unperceivedly, into the minds of those young Persons of Quality for whom I wrote, Sentiments of true Piety and Vertue. And these I thought would not so happily gain admittance and entertainment, if they were presented in a Scholar like-Discourse, or a profess'd Book of devotion, as when they were taken, not from common places but from the Nature of the Things and Persons Introduc'd; and without formality Instill'd by the occasional discourses of a young Gentleman and fair Lady, for whom the Beauty and the Merit ascrib'd to the Speakers, had given the Hearers a great Esteem and Kindness. And I shall not scruple to own, that I, who value time above most other things, did not think it worth the expence of mine, to give my self the trouble of Writing a Book, only to give others a Divertisement in Reading

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Reading it. And whilst I was
Conversing with such Excellent
Company, as our noble Martyrs,
and Meditating on such Serious
Subjects, as are Death, and the
Worth of that Heavenly Religion
for whose sake They despis'd It ;
I found my self Incited, and
thought my self Oblig'd, to aim
less at the Pleasing of some few
Nice Exactors of Regularity, than
to Possess many Readers with high
and noble Sentiments of the Chri-
stian Religion, and the sublime
Dictates of it; and thereby both
Elevate their minds to a generous
Contempt of all they can lose and
suffer for it, and Fill them with
bright *Ideas* of Heroick Vertue,
and of the much brighter Glories
that will Crown it. By such Re-
flections, I was induc'd not to
omit some Passages that seem'd
likely to further the main Ends I
pursu'd, though I foresaw, that per-
haps some rigid Judges would say,
that they might have been spar'd.

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For as I writ not a Romance, wherein Authors are wont to aim no higher, than to Delight the Delicate Readers, and Escape the Critical ones, by making their Composures Diverting and Regular ; so I presum'd that to employ a more Useful, though less Fashionable way of Writing, was allowable for Me, who ought to endeavour in such a piece as This, rather to propose Patterns of Virtue, than Models of Skill or Eloquence; and to think it more Successful, if the Readers shall upon perusing it, Imitate our excellent Martyrs Piety, than if they should only Applaud their History. Which both as to Stile and Reasonings, is freely submitted to your Judgment, by

Sir,

your most &c.

THE

MARTIN'S CALLED
Love & Religion

Demonstrated in the

Martyrdom

OF

THEODORA,

AND OF

DIDYMUS.

CHAP. I.

THough it may seem ill-natur'd to leave the Chast *Theodora* in so deplorable a Condition, yet it is requisite to do so for a while, that we may learn what was attempted to rescue her out of it.

It is not to be doubted, but that *Didymus* was not long kept a stranger to the barbarous usage she had suffered. That of so illustrious a Lady could not but make a great noise, and reach a multitude of ears; and especially those of so concern'd a Person as *Didymus*: The wounds of Lovers tender hearts, giving them

them oftentimes secret Presages of approaching misfortunes relating to their Love: As many other wounded men have the unhappy Priviledge of being able, by feeling of pain, to discern such approaches of ill weather, as affect not unhurt men.

Didymus therefore being quickly too much ascertain'd of the unwelcome News of the distress of his fair Mistress, was too generous a Lover to deliberate, whether he should expose his life for her rescue: His deliberation being only about the means, how to make so difficult an attempt a prosperous one. In order to this, he happily finds out one of the Officers of the Guards, that were placed about the infamous House, to which *Theodora* was condemned: Who having been his fellow Soldier in the Roman Armies; he hoped would either for the sake of Vertue or of *Didymus*, be prevail'd with to further so handsom a Design as his.

Wherefore addressing himself to this Commander, with a very obliging and yet civil Freedom: Generous *Septimius*, says he, I cannot but look upon it as one of the chief advantages I have obtain'd by venturing my Life in the Roman Camps, that I had the happiness to be acquainted with you there, and to be a spectator of
your

your Gallantry ; which did not only then raise me to a desire of imitating it, but allows me now to own a request to you, that none but a gallant Person ought to be entrusted with, or would easily grant. Generous *Didymus*, replies the Roman, When I accompanied you in following our propitious Eagles, I found so great a contentment in your acquaintance, and so strong a spur to Glory, in your examples, that I look'd upon the advantage of having been your fellow Soldier, as preferable to the honour of Leading the most numerous Troops I may at any time Command. And I shall think all the hazards I then expos'd my self to, abundantly rewarded, if any power they have procured me, may enable me to do you service. Tell me then frankly, in what case, and after what manner, you would have it employ'd for you ; and as I assure my self, that so vertuous a Friend as *Didymus*, will desire nothing but what is just, so he may assure himself, not to be refus'd any service, that is but Dangerous.

Our Lover embolden'd by so encouraging a declaration, first made him a very grateful Acknowledgment for it, and then proceeded to say, If you have ever had

the happiness to be acquainted with *Theodora*, or so much as to have seen her, 'twould be needless, as well as improper, for me to offer at giving you a Character of her, which you must needs think injurious to her. But if you have not, the shortness of the time will only permit me to assure you, that not only she has given me those Sentiments of her Excellencies, that I never had, nor ever thought myself capable of having, for any of her Sex; but that in other Persons strangely indispos'd to admit such impressions, she has often excited such wonder and such flames, as very rarely have been produced in other men, and perhaps, more rarely been merited by other women.

This admirable Person, for exercising among other vertues, that of an invincible Constancy, to her Religion, and refusing to Sacrifice to *Venus Flora*, and some other of those Deities, whom her Perfections might, though her Religion did not, exempt from adoring; is by your savage President condemn'd to be expos'd to the publick Lust: And a Party of those gallant Roman Soldiers, that use to be so gloriously led on by you to win Battels, conquer Kingdoms, and enlarge at once the Fame and Limits of the Empire, are
now

now employ'd to captivate innocent Virgins, and defend their brutish Ravishers. You may easily guess by this, continues he, that my request is like to prove an earnest one; that you would please to treat with some of those soldiers of yours, in whom you think you have the greatest Interest, and dispose them to assist me in rescuing *Theodora* out of so infamous a Prison, and accept from me greater recompences for doing a handsom action, than they can expect from the President, for doing a barbarous one; I hope I need not tell you, in the hast this affair requires, that all possible care will be taken to keep you from being endanger'd by *Theodora's* deliverance, nor will I add how unexpressible an Obligation you will lay on me, to heighten my gratitude to some proportion to your Favours; because I know it must necessarily fall short of them, and are due to a person that loves to do gallant Actions for their own sake, and had rather have great debts of gratitude, remain due to him, than paid to him; wherefore I shall only mind you, that the time is so short, that if your assistance be not as quick as obliging, I fear 'twill be as ineffectual. I shall quicken you only by assuring you, that when you act for the

accomplish'd *Theodora*, you act for a person that has a Right to all that Beauty and Vertue can give one a Title to.

With the same freedom, replies *Sep-timius*, with which you have own'd to me your Religion, I declare to you, that mine is that of my Country, and my Ancestors; and that I worship those propitious Deities, that have made the Romans the Conquerors of the World, and rewarded those that adored them with an Universal Monarchy; but though I exceedingly approve so triumphant a Religion, yet I confess to you, that I do not like the ways that the President takes to propagate it: such cruel methods being apt to make the world suspect, that our best Argument is Force: And whilst the Persecutors think it a glorious thing to see the Temples fill'd at any rate; I had rather see in them fewer but sincere Votaries, than have them throng'd with such pusillanimous Dissemblers, as would not come in, unless they were Scar'd in, thither. And, though Terrors and Torments work sometimes upon the weaker sort of *Christians*, yet the more resolute do so often despise them, that our Persecutions convert not those unhappy Persons, but frequently stagger many of our own; and I
confess

confess freely to you, *Didymus*, that all the Christians Arguments work less with me, than our in humane manner of confuting them. But I do not only disapprove, but detest, this infamous Practice of our President ; which makes him loose not the respect only and the pitty, but the common Humanity we owe to Women, and think to do the Goddesses a service, by disfiguring their fairest Images here below, with the most shameful of Blemishes. I cannot bring my self to imagine, that such gentle Deities, can like such barbarous Worshipers, who not only immolate to them the lives of men, but what is far more precious, the Vertue and Honour of Women ; for if I could believe they like such Sacrifices, I should think them unworthy any Sacrifices at all. You will easily therefore *Didymus*, credit me, that I was absent when my soldiers were put by the insolent Judge, upon so mean an employment. He durst not have offered to have obtruded it upon them, had I been there ; or if he had, I had dared to use him as his insolence had deserved. But without loosing time in passionate Expostulations, about things made remediless, by being past, let us speedily apply ourselves to the rescue of *Theodora*. For,
though

though I have heard strange things of her, and such as made me think Fame a great Flatterer, if not a frontless Liar, yet I believe the Reports about *Theodora*, as I believe the Delphick Oracles, now that I find so undeniable a Testimony of her merit, as her being your Mistress. I will therefore without delay, prepare some Soldiers to assist you in her Rescue, and I cannot doubt the success in an attempt made to serve a distressed Beauty, and a generous Friend. If there be occasion, you need not doubt of my more openly appearing for you. For how highly soever such an action may provoke the President, or even the Emperour, I hope to let you see, that you have trusted a Roman, a person that had rather be the object, than the minister of their Cruelties, and would not be accessary to such a misemployment of Absolute Power, to be made a Sharer in it.

As soon as *Septimius* had ended these words, he did, to prevent those acknowledgments he saw *Didymus* was about to make him, take that gallant Youth by the hand; and leading him towards the place, where he expected to find the Soldiers he most confided in, he entertain'd him in the way about the hopesullest Expedients

for

for the Compassing of his admirable Mistresses Rescue. And having afterwards sent for the two persons, he thought likeliest to be prevail'd on, to a convenient place, near to that to which they had brought *Theodora*; he briefly, but pathetically, declaring to them, how much the brave *Didymus* was his friend, and how much he deserv'd to be so, enflam'd them with an indignation at the savage Presidents disgracing them, by so infamous an employment, as they were now about; and then assur'd them of rewards from *Didymus*, suitable to the liberality of so generous a Person: After withdrawing himself, to give *Didymus* a short account, how far he had proceeded, he left the rest to be compleated by him; who prompted by his native liberality, and his high concern, did not stay to cheapen his Mistresses Liberty, but with the hasty Passion of a Lover, proffer'd them more than even *Septimius's* promises gave them reason to expect: Nor would he have declin'd to embrace any Articles of Agreement, they could have propos'd, though the parting with his Life had been one, so *Theodora's* Deliverance were another.

The fence those soldiers had of the
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affront put on them, by the President, joyn'd with the Ambition they had to please their lov'd Commander, and the gratitude his friends profus'd Bounty had newly oblig'd them to ; made them quickly accommodate *Didymus* with a military Habit, and prepare some of their Comrades to allow him the first admittance into her Chamber ; partly by sharing some of the newly receiv'd Presents among them, and probably by representing him to them, when thus prepar'd as a person who having been passionately in love with *Theodora*, and been scornfully slighted by her, was desirous at any rate, to satisfy at once his appetite and his revenge. And by this means, before that short time was expir'd, that had been as an Act of Grace, allow'd the disconsolate Virgin, to deliberate whether she would yet comply with the Judge; an entrance into her Chamber was permitted to her Lover; who (in order not only to his present but further Design) had purposely closed the vizor of his Helmet ; upon which score, not being knowable by his fair Mistress, he met with from her the reception we have formerly related.

C H A P. II.

THough, in the sad Condition wherein our disguis'd Lover, found his desolate Mistress, her sorrow and her fears, did somewhat cloud her Beauty, yet they could not hinder her looks from being so charming and Majestick, as to create less pitty than respect. Wherefore with gestures, wherein this was as visible as he could make it, he told her, without approaching too near; Do not, Madam, I beseech you, add to your other troubles, the apprehension, that because I appear in the circumstances of a Ravisher, I come to commit a Rape: *Theodora* is so great an ornament to the Christian Religion, and her Purity is an ornament so dear to *Theodora*, that Heaven will not permit, either that *Antioch* should be rob'd of one, or she of the other. And therefore, that Providence which you have so generously trusted, has sent me to your rescue, which after the care I have taken to dispose things without doors, 'twill not be difficult to compass, if you please to make use of the Military Habit I have brought hither, disguise and convey your self hence. Nor need you be solicitous, what will become of me, for I am under the same

same care of the same Providence, that now justifies your reliance on it, by providing for your escape: And I that found means to come in hither, may be succesful in attempting a Retreat, or if I should not succeed in it, I shall not miss the joy of paying my Duty; where I had the most desire and cause to do it; and shall leave the world with the satisfaction of having highly oblig'd it, by the preservation of the most accomplish'd Person in it. And Madam (continues *Didymus*) that you may not doubt the willingness or the intentions wherewith this offer is made you, be pleas'd to know that it comes from the now fortunate *Didymus*, who justly thinks that in aspiring to your acceptance of it, he does less proffer a service, than beg a favour, that will not only be a recompence, but a high Obligation.

The name of *Didymus*, and Discourse so suitable to it, made by him that assum'd it, soon dissipated the dismal apprehensions his habit, and her circumstances had given her: She knew so well his Courage, his Vertue, and his Love, that nothing unlawful or mean, was to be fear'd; but the boldest things, if they were as noble as hazard, might justly be expected.

expected, from him: So that this attempt did perhaps as much oblige her, as it surpris'd her. Wherefore, as soon as she had recompos'd her lately disorder'd thoughts she told him, with looks serene enough to let him see how much she trusted him; This action, generous *Didymus*, is of a nature so extraordinary, that my ingratitude would be so too, if my sense of it were not. To own and rescue a persecuted and affronted Maid, and to do it with more hazard than you need run in the Roman Armies, to purchase Fame and Honours, in an action so disinterested, and so unexampled, that I want words to celebrate it, as well as merit to deserve it, and power to requite it. But I admire so rare an effect of Vertue, (continues she) can consent to the destruction of its Author. No, Generous *Didymus*, 'tis enough that the virtues of *Christians* be treated as crimes by the *Romans*: They must not meet the like usage from *Theodora*; she must not purchase a life, that she values as little her self as others have cause to do, at so high a rate, as your partial Charity persuades you to set upon it. For even those that do now most pity me would repine at the preservation of my life, if it should cost that of a Heroe. Especially,

Especially, if I should designedly be accessory to so great a Loss: Which accompanied with a publick Indignation, and my own Reproches for my Ingratitude, would certainly make that Life a burden to me, that at so dear a rate you would preserve as a Blessing. But —

Here *Theodora* was going to proceed, when her griev'd Lover, fearing that if she did so, she might make some Declaration unfavourable to his Wishes, thought fit to endeavour to prevent it, by saying to her with a profound respect. Ah, Madam, do not make your mistaking Compassion more cruel to me, then the severity of the *Romans* themselves, which we *Christians* justly Tax, can possibly be. For they will but in a few moments take away that Life, which you would at once protract and render Miserable. Do not, I beseech you, Madam, (continues he) think my services Meritorious, because they are paid you in this place, and in your Persecuted Condition. No, Madam, *Theodora* has Prerogatives enough, to make many less unworthy (though not more zealous) than I, ambitious to serve her, in what Circumstances soever Providence shall think fit to place her. Whatever the *Romans*, that worship Fortune and

and Victory as Goddesses, and find their Prosperity the powerfulllest Argument to support and spread their Religion, may think of Sufferings embrac'd for Conscience sake: sure we *Christians*, that adore a Crucified Saviour, who, as he *took upon him the form of a Servant*, was put to Death between two Thieves, as a Slave and a Malefactor too; ought not to let any Persecutions, or Indignities, lessen our Veneration or Concern for those that chuse to Suffer for him, and imitate as well as own him, whatever it cost them. Nor, Madam (pursues *Didymus*) needs your having been brought to this place, make you think your self at all dishonour'd, in the Opinions of those that can make just Estimates of things. They look on Sufferers for truth with His undeceiveable Eyes, that, by one of the Penmen he inspir'd, having mention'd those Persons that for Religions sake were *Imprison'd, Destitute, Tormented, Affronted* forc'd in the Skins of Beasts, to wander like them in Desarts, and lodge in Dens; Honours them with this Character and Testimony, more glorious than all the Panegyricks of Orators, and Laurels of Conquerors, That *The World was not worthy of them*. And such Judges will think

Venus

Venus an infamous Courtezan, though the *Romans* adore her in their Temples; and will not think *Theodora* the less excellent Person, for having been condemn'd on the score of Vertue to a Scandalous place. Honour were a mean thing, and not worthy to have its loss much fear'd, or regretted; if we could forfeit it without having forsaken Vertue; and much more, if we could be depriv'd of it for having closely follow'd Her. Nothing can blemish true Reputation, that cannot be declin'd without manifest injury to Religion, which justifies our Acting whatever it imposes. The Angels themselves that were sent to *Sodom*, scrupl'd less to go even thither, then to disobey him that made it their duty to do so, nor were polluted by entering into that abominable place; and being attempted by the brutish Inhabiters of it, carried thence the Angelical Purity wherewith they came thither.

Didymus thought fit to say what has been repeated, that he might Console so chaste a Virgin as *Theodora*, who had still enjoy'd, as well as merited, a spotless Reputation; by assuring her, that the barbarous Affront she had been expos'd to, for Constancy to her Religion, had
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not, among unbiass'd Judges, lessen'd the high Esteem her former Life had justly given them of her Vertue. But he would not discourse long of a Subject so Nice; that 'twas difficult not only to insist on it, but so much as to mention it, without being uneasie to so tender a Modesty as hers he was speaking to. Upon which account, passing on to another Argument, he told her, These things I have mention'd, Madam, to let you see, how little I can pretend to merit by the Circumstances of the duty I pay you; and consequently, how little you need scruple to accept of my further Service, without which my past Endeavours will be useless to us both. And give me leave to own to you, Madam, that 'twas not without much trouble, as well as surprize, that I heard the incomparable *Theodora's* Merit so much injur'd, as to have the valuableness of my Life put into the Ballance with that of hers, nay, and made to Preponderate. Alas, Madam, there are Legions, that as well as I dare expose their Lives to the greatest hazards, and run greater dangers for some despicable pay, or a few worthless Leaves, than I do to serve my Religion, and the fairest Professor of it. Every day affords thousands of such Men as I: Else the *Roman* Camps would not be so frequently Recruited,

cruited, and those Numbers that fall in Breaches, or in Battels, would not have their Rooms so ambitiously supplied, by Men that see them do so. But such Persons as attain to be both the Ornaments of their Religion, and the Honour of their Sex, must be so Excellent, and are so Rare, that 'tis not every Age that produces so much as one of them. Such Exemplary Ladies, do as well improve as enoble the times and places they live in : The respect and love Men have for them, makes their good Counsels very persuasive ; the loveliness of their Persons is so diffus'd to their Action, as, by making Men forward to take them for Examples, adds to their Vertues, both a great Splendor, and a powerful Influence. That *Theodora* is not only one of that small Number, but eminent in it ; nothing but her Presence, could keep it from being uneasie for me to evince. But, Madam (continues he) though in such Circumstances as mine, your scrupulous Modesty may keep Men silent, yet it ought not to keep them from being Just. Your profound Humility may draw a Curtain, that may hide your Vertues from your Eyes ; but in the Eyes of others, it cannot but encrease their Number, and exceedingly
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add to their Lustre. You need not therefore, Madam (pursues he) scruple to receive the Service I aspire to do you, upon an injurious apprehension, that 'tis above Reward ; whilst indeed it pretends not to any at all, except the Satisfaction and Honour, that will be inseparable from the performance it self. Here *Didymus* paus'd for some moments ; being sensible, how difficult a task he was entering upon : Since 'twas, without prejudicing his Love, to own to his Mistress her self, that he did not serve her upon the score of That. But however ; the sincerity of his affection, and the great desire he had to make his persuasions prevalent, hasten'd him to prevent her Answer, by thus prosecuting his Discourse : 'Tis true, Madam, that *Theodora's* perfections did not miss in me, to have the operation that they are wont to have, upon those that enjoy the opportunities of considering them : and if she had been in a distress greater than that she is now in, though her Religion had not at all contributed to bring her into it, I should joyfully have expos'd my self, to a greater hazard than I now run, to rescue her from it. But, Madam, that is not our case ; for that which now brings me hither,

ther, is none of those sentiments, that if I were possessor of a Crown, would bring me to lay that and my self at your feet, and think my self more happy in your acceptance of it, than in all the advantages and prerogatives that could belong to it. For, Madam, the resolution that led me hither, was not inspir'd by the fair, but by the devout and vertuous *Theodora*. If she had no Charms, but those that cannot be seen with bodily Eyes, or if her visible Beauty were but moderate or none at all; her Exemplary Piety and Unshaken Constancy, shining in such extraordinary Expressions of them, as she has this day given, would make me think my self unworthy of Life, if I should stick at hazarding it to save so precious a one, as hers, and what I knew she would far more unwillingly loose; and thereby do some right to Divine Providence, which by so unexampled a reliance on it, was thought in some sort engag'd to answer so uncommon and entire a Trust. After what she did for Christ, I did not think I could do enough for her, if I did less than I have endeavour'd to do. And therefore, Madam (concludes he) I hope as well as beg, that you will no longer scruple to accept of that rescue, that Providence offers

offers you, by an unmercenary and most willing hand, but will vouchsafe to make use of this Military Garment (at which words *Didymus* with great respect, pointed at His) and allow my endeavours, by procuring your safety, to secure my happiness.

To this moving Speech, the fair person, that 'twas address'd to, return'd this calm Answer.

Though the handsom and obliging things you have been pleas'd to say, Generous *Didymus*, have made all the impressions on me that they ought to have; yet I must, with your pardon, freely tell you, that they naturally afford an inference, quite opposite to what you would conclude from them; since by discovering more and more of your Gall ntry and Friendship, they let me still further see, how much the World would loose, by being depriv'd of so much Vertue, and how unexcusable I, above all others, should be, if I should be willingly accessory to that loss. Your too too excessive Complements, I must not pretend to answer; since 'twould be too great a reflection on *Your* Judgment, as well as *Mine*, to think you meant them for any thing more than what I have called them. But in answer to the serious part of your Discourse, I shall tell

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you,

you, that, if I had proceeded in what I was going to say to you, when you interrupted me, I had, perhaps, prevented some of the things you have said, by freely acquainting you (as I now mean to do) with the state of my Case, and the intentions it suggested to me. When the inhumane *President* (continues *Theodora*) had condemn'd me, either to offer Sacrifice in an Idol Temple, or be led away to this infamous place; I was in such a perplexity and agony as can hardly be conceiv'd, especially by a Person that is not of my Sex; for Death it self was thought too mild an evil, to be one of those, among which I was condemn'd to make my choice. On the one side; the infamy of this detestable place was that which I could not think on, without the utmost horror and indignation; and not only my Sex and Breeding, but even the Dictates of more than one Vertue (Modesty and Chastity) concurr'd to heighten my abhorrence of it. But on the other side; I remembred, that I did not vow Obedience to God with any exceptions or reserves; that I was both a Disciple and a Worshipper of a Persecuted and Affronted Redeemer, for whom (though there were not an infinite Inequality between our Conditions) I could not suffer more, than he had already suffer'd for

for my sake ; having not only *endur'd the Cross*, but *despis'd the Shame*, which the *Jews* insolent Malice, and the *Romans* Barbarous Custom, had annexed to it. And I thought that, perhaps, Providence had led me into this distress, to give me an Opportunity of shewing, that I could do more than die for Christ. But I must not now trouble you, with the various thoughts that distracted my Mind on this dismal occasion ; on which all that I could say, to those that rudely press'd me to give a positive answer, was that of the things they propos'd, I plainly saw that both were to be refus'd, and therefore I could make choice of neither. But since I would make no Election for my self, their Malice soon made one for me, of this detestable place. I was so confounded, and as it were stunn'd, at the first steps they forc'd me to take towards it, that I scarce knew what to think, or what I did ; save that I remembered, that Idolatry was in the Sacred Books represented as a most odious, though Spiritual, Fornication ; and that Apostacy would be my own Crime, whereas the Consequences of refusing it, could make me but the Object of anothers : And remembering my self to be a Daughter of him, that against Hope believed in Hope, to follow *God's Call*, I

did like him, *Obeys, not knowing whether I went*: Yet having this Satisfaction, that I acted according to the Dictates of a well inform'd Conscience, so that, whatever the way might prove, I need not fear to be misled by closely following an Infallible Guide.

Here the Chast Virgins words were a little interrupted by the flowing Tears, and the inevitable Discomposure, that were produc'd by the sad remembrance of the distress'd Condition she was recounting. But having, as soon as she was able suppress'd, those visible effects of her virtuous Grief, she thus pursu'd her Discourse.

Revolving these and the like thoughts in my Mind. I arriv'd at this infamous place. And being for a while left alone in this Room, to try whether yet I could be brought to change my Mind; the nearer approach of what I was to endure, making it look more hideous to me, than, till then, I thought 'twas possible for any thing to appear, made me presently think of flying for Refuge to the dark Sanctuary of Death; and by dispatching my self drown in my yet untainted Blood, both my own dismal fears, and my Persecutors brutish hopes. But then there came into my mind, what I had been often

ten taught, and, whilst I was unconcer'd, judg'd rational to believe, of the unlawfulness of Killing ones self, upon any account whatsoever. I consider'd, that God, who made our Love unto our selves, the standard of the affection we owe our Neighbour, in forbidding us to destroy anothers Life, must be suppos'd much more to prohibit us that violence against our own. And if Fratricide be justly listed amongst the blackest Crimes, because of that Relation the slaughter'd persons have to those that Kill them; how Criminal upon that score must be the Murder of our selves, where the Relation is not nearer, only because 'tis too near, to be properly any at all? The Sovereign Author and absolute Lord of our Lives, having thought fit to employ us here in his Service, we cannot, without violating our Duty to him, desert it until we have perform'd his Errand, which is, to glorifie him by our Lives; till loyalty to his Truth, or his Commands, convince us, that we may better glorifie him by our Deaths. Such Considerations as these would, I hope, have restrain'd me from ending my Life with a Crime; but the thoughts of it were quickly suppress'd, by my remembering that in this place, I was destitute of Instruments to act it with. Where-

fore remembring that *Daniel* had been preserv'd, though not *from* the Lyons Den, yet *in* it; and his three Friends were not deliver'd from the Fiery Furnace, till they had been cast into it; and having learned by those Examples, that no Succours can come too late, that God designs for our Rescue, I betook my self to Prayer, as the most hopeful, as well as the most innocent course, I could take; and with an arden- cy, heighten'd with the extremity of my Distress, I was beseeching God, though with the loss of my Life, to preserve a Purity, that by his Grace had been hither- to kept unblemish'd, when your unex- pected enterance brought me a return of those Prayers, I had yet scarce utter'd. Judge then, Generous *Didymus* (subjoyns *Theodora*) by the Condition I was in, how much I must think my self Oblig'd by so brave and seasonable an attempt to deli- ver me out of it.

To serve so bright a Vertue, lodg'd in so noble a Shrine, I thought, Madam (says *Didymus*, Interrupting her) to be as much my Duty, as to have found an Op- portunity to do it, is my Happiness: and if you please to permit me, as I now hope you will, the Honour and Satisfaction of compleating my Endeavours to deliver you; I shall much more value my self, upon

upon the having paid you that Service (though it be more proportionate to my power, than to my desires) than if I had rescued a *Roman* General, or for successful attempts, been made one my self.

When Thanks are purchas'd by Merit, replys *Theodora*, to disclaim a right to them, does not forfeit it, but encrease it; nor need you make me any new Professions, since after the Testimonies you have given me already of your Vertues, and your Friendship, I should make my self unworthy of them, if I doubted of their Reality, or Greatness. Yes, *Didymus*, I believe what you declar'd, of the Disinterestedness of your proceedings in the Rescue of a Person of no greater Merit, than I can pretend to: Since the Circumstances of your Attempt, make it appear too generous to let me suspect, that the Aim of it was other than noble too. And indeed, after what you have done (continues She) it would ill become me to scruple to be further oblig'd by you, and therefore I shall venture to make you a Request, as soon as I shall have acquainted you with the Reasons, 'tis grounded on.

Didymus being surpriz'd at this welcome Declaration, was going with Transports to assure Her, he could deny her nothing, nor obey her in any thing with-

out Joy ; when she prevented him, by thus continuing her Discourse. You know, my Generous Deliverer, that Virgins have so great and clear a Right to keep themselves such, against all outward, Assaults; that Monarchs themselves (whose Force is not to be by force oppos'd, when it tends but to deprive us of our Lives) may be forcibly resisted, when they strive to offer Violence to our Chastity. Since then, an untainted Purity is a Jewel, that the Possessors are allowed to preserve and defend, even by uncommon ways, if others will not serve ; and such as would in other Cases be unwarrantable : Though I do not, as I lately told you, think it lawful, as many do, to secure Virginity by Self-Murder ; yet I cannot disapprove their Opinion, that allow a Virgin in Case of Extremity, to emlore that Death from anothers hand, that she is forbidden to give her self, with her own ; since in such a Calamitous Condition, Heaven, by debarring her all other ways of escaping from Defilement, seems to approve of this. And the Scripture informs us, that though the Prophet *Jonas* held it unlawful to drown himself, yet he per-
Jonah. 1. 12. suaded those that Sail'd with him, to cast him bound into the Sea, when neither they nor he expected

pected he could out-live many Minutes (as indeed 'twas not without Miracle that he did.) Wherefore, pursues *Theodora*, if you will perfect what you have so Obligingly begun, you must lend me your Arm and Sword, to free me by a speedy Death, from mischiefs much greater than it. The *Romans* will easily believe, that my resistance and provocations transported you to a Revenge, at which the barbarous usage I have receiv'd at their hands, makes it unlikely they will be much offended: The grant of my request will not hinder you from being, what you are pleas'd to think a Title, *Theodora's* Deliverer. For, in the estimation of Equitable Judges, as well as in Hers, 'twill suffice to give you a right to that Title, That you have deliver'd her from her greatest Calamity and Danger. Nor will the good office I desire, be inconsistent with my obtaining the Honour of Martyrdom; St. *John* the Baptist, because his bold Zeal for the Laws of Religion, gave the first rise to those Persecutions that terminated in his Death, is justly reckon'd among Martyrs, though he was privately beheaded in his Prison, at the solicitation of a Curtezan: and if one willingly suffers death for the Truth, or the Interest of Religion, there needs not a Scaffold or a Stake, and a publick Executioner, to make such a person a Mar-

tyr. And since the Persecutions that now make havock of the Church, are like to continue long; and since I am resolv'd, by Gods assistance, never to avoid them, by any either unlawful or unhandfom way: the Escape you would perswade me to, would but for a while delay those Sufferings I ought not to shun, and would make them much less acceptable, by my having endeavour'd to avoid them; especially by an action so mean, if not criminal too, as to consent to the loss of an excellent Person, that most generously expos'd himself for my safety. Deny me not therefore, concludes *Theodora*, with Tears in her Eyes, the last request I shall ever make you; but by sheathing your Sword here (at which words she pointed with blushes, at her fair and innocent Breast) be pleas'd, by one quick and charitable Stroke, to perfect my deliverance, without making me Stain it with the Blood of my deliverer; free us both from eminent Danger, *me* of being Dishonour'd, and *you* of being Tormented; and by the same Act of Friendship, secure me the Coronet of Virginity, and procure me the Crown of Martyrdom.

Great was the Surprise, and greater was the Trouble, wherewith *Didymus* heard the conclusion of this Discourse:

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In answer to which, as soon as his astonishment would permit him to speak; Ah Madam, says he, what have you ever seen in the unfortunate *Didymus*, that could tempt you to make him so strange a proposition. That I, whose Errand hither was to venture my Life in your Service, should my self destroy the admirable Person I came to Rescue; and that *Didymus* should imbrue his guilty Hands in *Theodora's* innocent Blood, to save one drop of which, He would gladly shed all his own. As your Piety deserves to be the Pattern of more than one Age, so I doubt not, but that in times very remote from ours, your Memory will shine as bright, as your Vertue and your Eyes do now; and then, how hideous a Monster must I appear to Posterity, that will look upon me as one, that could in a trice, pass from pretending to be your Deliverer, to be really your Murderer; and this for no other Reason, than that you were pleas'd to manifest a great concern for my Preservation? And pardon me, Madam, (continues *Didymus*) if I tell you, that your Generosity makes you forget some of your other Vertues, and even of the Dictates of the Religion you have hitherto adorn'd; Since your Commands, if obey'd, would engage me to commit a Crime, and make you your self,

self, more than accessory to it. For, Madam, since you acknowledg Self-Murder to be unlawful, how can your Commands give me a right to take from you, a Life, that you have not power to dispose of? and what Excuse can I have, without so much as the pretence of acting under Authority, to destroy an Innocent Person? For, Madam, since I am to declare, why I presume to do the thing in the World I would least be put upon, to disobey *Theora*; give me leave to tell you, that, should I execute what you require, the Action would not be excusable in either of us. For as *Adam* sinned in doing a forbidden thing, though she that prevail'd with him to do it, *Was first in the Transgression*; and the *Jewish* Prophet was torn in pieces by a Lion, though he did what he was seduc'd to, by the persuasions of a Prophet: So the Scripture clearly condemns *David* of Murder, because he kill'd *Uria*, though not with his own hand, yet with the *Sword of the Children of Ammon*: And the Scripture tells us too that God plagu'd the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness, because, as the Text expresses it, *They made the Calf, that Aaron made*. And indeed by whatever Hand innocent Blood is shed, the Guilt of it will light upon the Person that procur'd it to be spilt. And
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to this I must add, That since *Christians* are in some cases, not only permitted, but Exhorted, if not Commanded, *To lay down their Lives for one another*: The high value and concern, I justly have for yours, makes me conclude, that this is certainly one of those Cases, and consequently, that I may lawfully offer you a Service, which you, perhaps, cannot lawfully refuse: Since Providence has left you no other Innocent way, than the acceptance of it, to escape your present danger. And the guilt of self-Murder may, for ought I know, be Contracted, not only by a positive Act, but by an inflexible refusal of the proffer'd means of Safety. Pardon me, I beseech you, Madam, pursues *Didymus*, if the great Concern I have for such a Person as *Theodora*, has Extorted from me, a greater plainness of Speech, than my profound Respect for Her would permit me, upon any other occasion. And because I perceive that, that which makes you most scruple to grant my humble Request, is, That your Superlative Generosity, and what your Humility persuades you to think Gratitude, make you solicitous for the preservation of a Life, hazarded for your sake; I must assure you, Madam, that your inflexibleness will no way make provision for my safety. For,
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if I should be Condemn'd by your cruel Commands, to leave you expos'd to the barbarous and defiling rudeness of those British Satyrs, that impatiently wait without the regret and shame, of having mis'd the Honour of *Theodora's* Rescue, will give me far greater Torments, than the *Romans* can, for having effected it. And I must add on this Occasion, Madam, (continues he, not without some change of Colour and Voice) that some Sentiments (which though I think not this a fit time or place to name, have been much Confirm'd and Heightned, by what I have this day had opportunity to observe) have so fast tied my Happiness to your Welfare, that the presence of my Soul is scarce more necessary to my Life, than your Safety is. Nor fancy, Madam, that the belief I own of the unlawfulness of Self-Murder, will secure my Life: for there are other ways, to procure Death to him that's weary of Life, than his own Sword, or a draught of Poyson; since Passion alone, when rais'd to a competent degree, may do the office of either of those. And since Joy it self, though the most pleasing and friendly of the Passions, has by its Excess, prov'd destructive of Mens Lives; why may not Grief, and Shame, and Indignation, which are Passions more violent, and very unfriendly

friendly to Nature, be able to produce as fatal Effects? And to shew you, Madam, (continues *Didymus*) how much reason I have to think, that your Condition dispenses me from obeying the Dictates of your Generosity, let me. — But, before *Didymus* had annex'd his Reasons, a Noise made without, gave him a hot Alarm, and made him fear, the patience of some that waited without, would not last very much longer; and therefore addressing himself to *Theodora*, with a Countenance as Petitioning as his Words, and Eyes, in which his Courage could scarce repress the Tears: How long, Madam, says he, will you upon groundless Scruple, neglect an Opportunity, whose Omission will be Irreparable. And how can you justifie to God, the slighting the means His Providence presents you, of easily securing your Safety. Ah, Madam, then (concludes *Didymus*) by one quick and necessary Resolve, regain your Liberty, preserve your Honour, and secure your Life. But if nothing that has relation to your self alone will move you, be pleas'd to reward the Services, I have Essay'd to do you, with the implor'd grant of your own Safety; and permit me for this once, rather to Serve you than Obey you.
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Nor need your generous Solitude for me, hinder, or retard your Resolution : The World will not blame a Spotless Virgin, for doing what is necessary to keep Her self such ; nor look upon it as a part of Ingratitude, to grant, to one that has done his best to serve Her, a Recompence, that he is so ambitious of, as to venture his Life to obtain it at her Hands. In short, Madam, for the time allows me not a long Discourse, if your Cruelty will not permit me to prevent your Death ; Grief, and other Passions, will not allow me to survive it : And then (supposing I should fail of making retreat) would it not be a much more happy Fate, that the constant *Didymus* should Die, for having sav'd the matchless *Theodora*, than for having lost Her ?

CHAP. III.

TO these pathetick Words he thought not fit to stay for an answer, but retiring to a corner of the room, he divested himself of his military Coat, and upon his knee, presented it to *Theodora*. She in the mean time, reflecting upon his Arguments, was by their force, convinc'd, that the motion she had made him, of killing

ling her, was grounded upon a dangerous Error. And the noise that had been made, in the outward room, alarming her, at least as much as it had done him, let her see she had no further time left her to deliberate. And therefore being prevail'd with, by supplications, made in so persuasive a way, that it appear'd a far less cruelty, even towards him, to accept, than finally to refuse, his offer : She first made her Blushes, and her silence intimate her consent, and then declar'd it more expressly, by raising him, and taking out of his hand what he presented to her. And to his joy (which his foresight that his success would be fatal to him, could not hinder from being very great) she receiv'd from him instruction how to put it on, and permitted him (though not without strange disorder in her mind and looks) to assist her : For as it was absolutely necessary to do it ; so he did it with all imaginable care, to distress so nice a Modesty, as little as was possible : And therefore, as soon as ever he had done that, with all the respect and decency the place and occasion would by any means permit, all that could be done without him, he left her to do herself, withdrawing to a part of the room, whence he could not see her. Which Retreat he was induc'd

induc'd to make, not only out of civility and respect, but perchance because the dangers that threat'n internal Chastity, have this peculiar fate, that usually those persons are most careful to shun them, that are the most resolv'd, and the best able, to surmount them.

As soon as the mutual Exchange of their habits had made it decent for them to discourse together, the disguis'd Virgin, with Cheeks cover'd with Blushes, and with looks so obliging, that they alone would have recompens'd *Didymus* for any less service than that she now receiv'd, addressing her self to her Benefactor; If your Reasons, says she, had not convinc'd me, that I could not without a crime free my self from my wretched Condition by death, and if yet death were not the only way, by which, if I decline your generous proffer, I can possibly shun, what I far more apprehend than death, dishonor; I should not leave you in a danger, wherein only your concern for Religion and for me, has engag'd you. But I doubt not the same Charity, that put you upon making me your generous proffer, and pressing me not to decline it, will make your pardon a fault, to which your own Reasons and Importunity have made you highly accessory;

cessory ; especially since I know you think a tenderness of Honor, and an abhorrence of all Defilement, to be things so allowable in a Virgin, as very much extenuate, if not justify, what they require of her. And indeed I shall do you but right, when I thankfully acknowledge, that in this whole transaction about my Rescue, your carriage has been such as would leave me no doubt, if ever I had been so unjust as to have any, of the purity and disinterestedness of your intentions, by which I am not a little confirm'd in the opinion I have always had, That Vertue may inspire as Noble and as Hazardous Enterprises, as Passion can. I know that in this days work you aim'd at higher Retributions than could be expected from one in my Condition. But yet I think my self oblig'd to assure you, That your Heroick Acts of Vertue and Friendship, have not been exercis'd towards a Person insensible of them ; but that your Merit, and your Favours, have produc'd all the esteem and other Sentiments, which they ought to produce, in a Person, that is not altogether incapable to discern and value them. And if the Pray'rs of a disconsolate Virgin, then sav'd by you, when all the rest of the World had abandon'd her, can have any
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interest at the Throne of Grace ; they will obtain for you, Blessings as great as your generosity to me has been and not less lasting, than my Sense of it will be ; and you will during a long protracted life, either be allow'd quietly to enjoy the Glory, your many meritorious Hazards of it have purchas'd, or else be enabled to find a happiness in your very Sufferings, by vertue of those peculiar Consolations that are reserv'd for a persecuted Condition ; as anciently Manna was vouchsafed the *Israelites*, only whilst they were Exiles in the Wilderness. The quick success God has been pleas'd to grant my Pray'rs for my own deliverance, lets me not despair to find him propitious, to those I shall with no less ardency put up for yours : But if your Charity should expose you to further danger, I solemnly promise you, that you shall find, I have been instructed, as well as oblig'd, by your generosity, and would not have left you expos'd for my sake, that I might shun any danger that had threat'ned but my life.

And now the mournful Virgin, being to bid her accomplish'd Votary a farewell, which probably enough would prove the last ; by a manifest change in her countenance, and the tone of her voice,
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and by the multitude of tears that fell from her fair Eyes, convinc'd him no less of the trouble she was in upon his account, than any verbal expressions could do it; though she said to him, in a most obliging manner, Farewel my Generous Deliverer; and may that God, who sees with what reluctance I consent to your danger, free you happily from it, and richly recompense that noble Charity that led you into it. I hope we shall yet see one another again upon Earth, I am confident we shall meet joyfully in Heaven; by which I must confess my self very highly favour'd, not only in my Deliverance, but in the instrument of it; since God makes me not beholden for my Rescue to any common person, but is pleas'd so to order it, that I receive the greatest of earthly Benefits, from the most Generous of men.

Madam, replies the much troubled *Didymus*, your own unequal'd perfections, and the operation they have had on me, make me so much yours, that your wishing me happy, does more towards the making me so, than your humility will allow you to be aware of. You have too much Merit, Madam, to let the Services I have paid you, have a title to any; and what I have had the happiness to perform
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is but what was every brave man in *Antioch's* duty to endeavour. But if your Goodness will needs make you think, that my poor Services should have another (for they can scarce have a greater) recompence, than you have already given them, by suffering them to contribute to your safety; and if you will vouchsafe to allow the memory of him that did them, a room in your thoughts, (which is the happiest Station it can aspire to upon earth :) I humbly beg your faithful servants Image may be look'd on without any troublesome degree of pity; since his condition will then need none, and the Idea would very much misrepresent the Original, if it should disquiet her, whom *he* never approach'd, but to serve Her. 'Tis suitable, Madam, to this frame of mind, that for *Theodora's* sake, I must now deny my self so much, as to hasten her departure, least some cross accident should prevent it: At which words, looking on her with a countenance that all his Courage could not keep from a discernable Change: Farewel, said he, incomparable *Theodora*, may you continue long the ornament and the Pattern of your Sex: And since we see that some Fruits may be as well preserv'd in Honey, as others in Brine and Vinegar,
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may the height of your Vertue be kept up but the objects of it so chang'd, that by a settled Prosperity you may henceforth have occasion to exercise your moderation and your gratitude, instead of your courage and your patience. Once more Farewel, concludes he, unequal'd *Theodora*; and may you live but with as much Contentment, as if I suffer for you, I shall die with Satisfaction.

Though these moving Expressions, and the accent wherewith they were deliver'd, did very sensibly touch a person so well natur'd and grateful as *Theodora*; yet she thought the fittest return she could then make to her Lover's discourse, was, presently to follow the advice he was so earnest to have her speedily embrace. And therefore bidding him farewell only by a look, wherein high degrees of sorrow and gratitude were plainly mingled; she immediately dispos'd her self to quit that dismal place: Which then afforded a noble instance, how little a great mind can be hindred from disclosing it self to be so, by the Stage 'tis oblig'd to act upon. For whilst in divers of the stately Temples of *Antioch*, Whores, (such as *Venus* and *Flora*,) and Ravishers, and Adulterers, (such as *Jupiter* and *Mars*) were solemnly ador'd;
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in an infamous Scene, dedicated to publick Lust and Violence; the strictest Chastity was exercis'd, and Martyrdom itself was contended for.

Having once ventur'd into the outward room, That Providence, to which she had in such discouraging Circumstances trusted her Virgin Purity, would not leave the rescue of it, incomplete; but whilst the waiting Russians were eagerly contending, who should succeed the person they took by the Habit to be *Didymus*, (and whose face they did not wonder to see muffled, presently after so savage an action as they suppos'd him to have committed) brought her safely out of that infamous Place. Whence, by the least frequented Passages she knew, she was quickly convey'd to the house of her dear Friend *Irene*, which happen'd to be nearer than her own.

There to avoid suspicion, some of her friends and relations were met together, to lament her Captivity, and joyn in Prayer to him that alone could deliver her, to be directed by God how they might (if it were possible) contribute to her rescue. But, though their Prayers were probably made with more zeal than hope, they were not a little alarm'd, when looking out to see who knock'd at the
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the door, they saw, as they thought, a Soldier, who would not have been quickly let in, if *Irene* had not presum'd it to be *Didymus*, who was coming to offer his Service to his captivated Mistress. But 'tis not easie to express the wonder and the joy, with which they soon discover'd that this was not *Theodora's* Lover, but herself; whose Beauty and her military Dress, would have made her, had the *Roman* Guards discover'd her, pass for their *Pallas*. Nor was such a Habit, though improper for a Virgin, unsuitable to a Great, as well as Chast Conqueror.

But though her presence never needed the endearment of a Surprise, yet the unexpectedness of it at that time and place, added to the Transports it produc'd; especially in *Irene*: Who after a thousand gratulations and caresses, at length begg'd in the name of the impatient Company, to know how the blessing they all receiv'd in her freedom, was procur'd. To which reasonable request she answer'd, by making a short but faithful Narrative, of what had occur'd since the time she was cited before the President, till she came to take Sanctuary among them; piously concluding, that, as what she had done not misbecoming a
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Christian, was altogether by the assistance of Divine Grace, so the succour she receiv'd to bring her out of danger was by the Conduct of Divine Providence, which in her delivery made use of the high vertue and generosity of *Didymus*. This Relation made the Company first return Thanks and Praises to the Divine Goodness, which were followed by the celebrations of the happy Instrument of it: every one, as it were by turns, endeavouring to vye, who should most commend so venturous and disinterested a Lover. Nor perhaps did *Theodora* herself, inwardly dissent from that grateful company. For, though her modesty and reservedness kept her from declaring her Sentiments, as others did theirs; yet perhaps that was because She thought, that having given a Candid account of his deportment, her Narrative had made her praises needless, the History it self being indeed a Panegyric.

After the Companies curiosity was some what satisfied by what *Theodora* had told them, and both *Irene* and she had made a request to a Gentleman that knew *Didymus* well, to endeavour to bring them speedy notice of what had happened to him, or was like to befall him: The two excellent Ladies retir'd to the apartment of *Irene*.

There

There the pious *Theodora*, having devoutly paid her solemn Thanks and Praise, for her almost miraculous Deliverance, to the Divine Author of it; she was accommodated by her Friend, with Cloaths befitting her Sex. Nor was it difficult for *Irene*, (though on so sudden an occasion) to furnish her with a Habit she liked; for besides, that, a Person so shap'd and fashioned as *Theodora*, could make almost any dress Graceful; she us'd to pity the mean vanity of those Ladies, that could be either Ambitious or Proud of what they must owe to a Taylor or a Dresser, and affected to be taken notice of, not so much for what they are, as for what they wear: And therefore, tho' she did not scrupulously decline fashionable Clothes because they were so; yet all the Ornaments that pass'd the limits of the modestest Decency, she always as little valu'd as she need-ed them.

C H A P. IV.

BEfore this rare Couple return'd to the rest of the Company, *Irene's* kindness for *Didymus* made her think, she ought not to loose this opportunity

of doing good offices to her absent Friend. And therefore having (as she easily might) brought the discourse to fall upon his late performances; I hope, Madam, says she to *Theodora*, you are now satisfi'd, that the Character I gave you of the greatness of my Cousins Vertue, and the Ardency of his Flame, was dictated more by his Merit than my Friendship. I were very ungrateful, replies *Theodora*, if I did not willingly acknowledge his Generosity to be altogether extraordinary, and that, as he could not oblige me more highly than he has done, so it was not possible that he should do it more handsomly.

I know, Madam, saith *Irene*, that *Theodora* may freely choose among all the illustrious Youth of *Antioch*, what person she would please to make happy: And, without considering her less obvious, though more admirable, Perfections; far less Beauty than she is Mistress of. has in our times, given the Possessors a share in the Imperial Throne, and perhaps too, plac'd them upon the *Roman* Altars. But yet, continues she, since I have the honour to know you too well, not to be confident, that you value Piety and Vertue, and a Flame regulated and excited by them, above those outward advantages

advantages which weaker Spirits are influenc'd by; I think I may presume to say; that I know not any person in *Antioch*, to whom the fair *Theodora* may with less Condescension vouchsafe a Share in her Favour, than to him, that had the happiness to give her so clear a proof of the ardency, the purity, and the disinterestedness of his Flame.

If I had not reply's *Theodora* with a somewhat dissatisfy'd look, been much surpris'd at the beginning of your Discourse; I had immediately stop'd you there: And lamented my infelicity, that *Irene*, whom I thought my self happy in having for my Friend, allows her self what is so repugnant to true friendship, as flattery is, I could, continues *Theodora* without pausing for fear of being prevented; easily, and with the approbation of many of the best Judges in *Antioch*, return the fair *Irene* her own Complements, if I thought fit to imitate what I cannot approve. And to Speak seriously, continues She, neither you nor I, nor any of our Sex, ought to think Skin-deep Beauty as great a Blessing, as 'tis an applauded one. For without our fault, and in Spight of our care to preserve it, a Thousand accidents may, and time certainly will, ruine the Loveliest Faces;

and perhaps to that degree, as not in the remains to leave it credible that ever they were handsome. 'Tis true that those vain Men, whose Passion masters their reason, are wont (for the most part with designs we ought not to be proud of) to speak extravagant things, and too often even prophane Ones, of the beauties they profess to adore. But though they really meant (which they very seldom do) all they say, in praise of those they represent as Goddesses; yet I think a considering person will scarce be very proud of receiving that Title, from those who can think that a few Colours and Features luckily mingled, are sufficient to make a Deity. An uncommon degree of Beauty, adds she, exposes the owner to extraordinary troubles, from the Envy of those that want it, and the Importunities of those that court it. And, without as much caution and watchfulness as turn it into a trouble, it too often proves a strong Temptation to those that admire it, and a dangerous Snare to those that possess it. And if I had the vanity to think, what you would persuade me to believe, I should yet take Beauty in a woman, to be like a rich Perfume; which though it be a thing very grateful in most companies, and perhaps (especially at
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first) very delightful to the wearer, yet does often discompose, not only strangers she chances to converse with, but the best Friend she has; and not seldom does mischief even to herself, by disordering her head, or casting her into fits of the mother. I beg your pardon, Dear Madam, says the fair *Irene*, with somewhat of sadness in her looks, that whilst I had so much Beauty in my eye and thoughts, I forgot, that it was in *Theodora* accompany'd with a far greater and scrupulous Humility; and I did not apprehend that I could be thought guilty of Flattery, so near to a witness (at which words she pointed to a Looking-Glass, that hung up in the room) ready to justify more than I had occasion to say. I willingly acknowledge with you, that the amiableness discoverable by the Eyes of every gazer, is a thing far less desirable than desired: And procures the possessors more praise, than it brings them happiness. And for my part, adds she, if I had the weakness to believe my self Mistress of what the folly of some has made them flatter me with, yet I should not be over much pleas'd with a Quality, that would add to those harms my frailty makes me guilty of, those which I never intended; and makes Ladies so mischief-

ous, to those that most love them, that even when they do not rob men of their Innocency, they deprive them of their Quiet. I confess therefore, Madam (continues *Irene*) that it was injurious to insist upon the praises of a face, when, how little soever it can be Match'd in its own kind, 'tis accompanied with Several Beauties of a much nobler kind. But that which induc'd me to speak as I did, was, to let the fair *Theodora* see, that I was justly sensible how great a thing I begg'd for my Friend; when I implor'd for him an interest in Her Favour. And I do the less despair of the effects of your Goodness, both to him and me, because I beg them for an absent friend, who is not in a condition to speak for himself; and who, as I perceiv'd by the obliging Relation you were pleas'd to make, of his Carriage towards you, declin'd making you any request, when his Services were so happy as not to be useless to you. His silence, answers *Theodora*, in such Circumstances, had more effect on me, than his passionatest solicitations would have produc'd. But the thing, I presume, you aim at, for him, is of that moment to me, that I cannot think fit to discourse of it till we can do so with more calmness and leisure, than we can at this time expect. You know,

know, *Irene*, that I have still look'd upon Marriage as one of the most important Actions of Life: And, though I think they have too mean a notion of Happiness and Misery, who imagine that one Creature can make either of them the portion of another; yet I think, that not only the dictates of discretion, but those of sincerity and chastity, oblige a woman to have a great care, not to enter into so near and indissoluble a Relation, upon any grounds, that are not like to last as long as it (and consequently, as our lives:) And therefore, a woman that resolves to be what she should be, when a wife, ought to deliberate much upon a Choice she can probably make but once; and not needlessly venture to embarque herself on a Sea so infamous for frequent Shipwracks, only because she is offer'd a fine Ship to make the long Voyage with. But, continues the bashful Virgin (not without some little disorder in her looks) since my dear *Irene* will needs make use of the privilege she has, to know more of my thoughts than I would disclose to any other person in the world; our friendship prevails with me to tell her, that if I were altogether at my own disposal, and could be induc'd to admit such a

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change of condition, as I have always been averſe from; I ſhould be more influenc'd in my choice by the ſhining Vertues and Extraordinary Services of *Didymus*, than by all the Advantages that either Titles, or Riches, or Dignities could give any of his Rivals. But, my Dear *Irene* (adds ſhe) we live in ſuch times, and I, for my own particular, am beſet with ſuch Circumſtances; that 'twere not only very unreaſonable, but wildly extravagant, for me to encrease my Commerce with the World.

For, *Irene*, continues ſhe, in my opinion, a *Chriſtian* does not deſerve to be happy, and a true one cannot think he is happy, whilſt the Church of Chriſt is miſerable: At leaſt, as far as outward Calamities can make it. When I ſee the Empire overrun with Idolaters and Perſecutors; when I ſee Ravishers and Whores, ador'd in ſtately Temples, and the only Worſhippers of the True God driven into Corners, and purſu'd even thither; when I ſee ſuch as God is pleas'd to *Heb. 11. 38.* declare *the World not to be worthy of*, treated by men as perſons not worthy to live in the World; but daily expell'd out of it, with ignominy and torments: When I ſay (adds *Theodora* with tears in her Eyes,) I conſider

der the general Desolation of the Church, and that I am like and willing to be, not a meer Spectator, but a suffering Actor, in this Tragedy; I cannot, in the midst of Her Sighs and Groans, listen to the unseasonable Complements of a Lover, think of relishing any Contentment, that descends not from a place too high for Persecution to reach. In these Sentiments, subjoyns she, I am warranted, by no less Authority than that of an Apostle; who, though not unfavourable to the Marriage State, disadvises those women that are free, from entering into it, at least during the present distress; though that were in his time, very much inferior to those straits we are now reduc'd to. Yet, Madam, says *Irene*, those expressions of Friendship, that a Conjugal Relation invites, are not only made allowable by it, but commendable, and are as real duties of Piety, and Vertue, as divers of the more abstracted Exercises of Religion. I do not contradict that, replies *Theodora*, but look upon that very thing, as a dissuasive, from the state of life, you would recommend. For, if I could think fit, to enter into it, it should be with a resolution, to do all that becomes me in it. And in such a calamitous Time as we live in, I could not do that, without coming

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ing far more than I now am, within the worlds reach ; since I should think it my duty, and perhaps be engag'd upon another account, to have such apprehensions for a near friends danger, as my own would be incapable of giving me. And the Contentment I now enjoy, in a disposition to quit the world without regret, would be destroy'd, or at least allay'd, by an uneasiness to part with, what duty and inclination would, perhaps, too much fasten me to. Here *Irene* was going to interrupt her by an answer ; when her fair friend prevented her, by thus continuing her discourse: And to me it seems very considerable, that the Apostle I lately mentioned, clearly enough intimates, that to persevere in a Virgin-State, in times of Persecution, gives those that prefer it, the great advantage of serving God more undistractedly ; and consequently of being more entirely and uninterruptedly imploy'd, in the direct Contemplation and Services, of an Object so Sublime that our mind cannot divert to another, without stooping to an inferiour one. And though it be true, that the duties of a Relation, may rightfully challenge a part of an engag'd persons time and care ; yet I see not why one that has no need, should enter into a Relation,

lation, that would make those distracting Duties necessary.

Though *Irene* found it scarce possible to answer *Theodora's* Reasons, yet her kindness to her absent friend, made her unwilling to lose the opportunity their privacy gave her, to make one attempt more in his favour: Which she did, by saying to his Excellent Mistress; But shall not the as faithful as unhappy *Didymus*, be allow'd to hope, *that* if once those dismal Clouds that pour down show'rs of Blood, shall be happily blown over, he may have a particular share in the publick Joy and Tranquility; *that* his Sufferings shall end with the Persecutions of the Church; *that* those fatal resolutions, that are so destructive to his happiness, may cease with their occasion; *that Theodora's* Severity will not out live the *Roman* Cruelty; and *that* her heart will not be the last place, where the Emperours cruel Edicts will continue to have a fatal Operation.

Alas *Irene*, says *Theodora*, somewhat troubled to be so press'd; how unseasonably do you now discourse to me, about things relating to a time, to which very probably my life will never reach. For, Subjoyns She, to deal clearly with you; I am so far from flattering my self, with
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an Expectation of those Halcyon days I wish you may live to see, that I shall not be surpriz'd, if this day prove the last I shall Spend in this World. And if before Night, I pass thence into another ; where the frailty and Mortality, upon which Marriage was founded ceasing, that condition of Life will have no Place ; but will be Succeeded by an Angelical State, where our Friendships, as well as our Persons, will be Transfigur'd, and made Incomparably more Perfect than they can be here below.

C H A P. V.

T*Heodora* had Scarce made an end of saying this, when her Conversation with her fair Friend was Interrupted, by the notice that was give them of the arrival of a Gentleman of their Religion, who brought some News that it Concern'd them to know. This advertisement soon brought back these two Excellent Ladies to the rest of the Company ; to which this Intelligent and Inquisitive Person was going to give an account, which the Sadness of his Looks prepar'd them to find an unwelcom one. However ; they listen'd to him with great

great attention, as well as Concern: and He, after a short Preamble, briefly acquainted them with some particulars, that will hereafter be more fully related. But that which he himself seem'd most mov'd at the mention of, and which most affected his hearers, was this; That when the President had notice of *Theodora's* escape, though there wanted not some Generous Men, that endeavour'd by several Arguments to diswade him from prosecuting her any further; Yet he was so far from being prevail'd with, to Comply with so reasonable a motion, that he solemnly Protested, that if ever he could get this Fugitive (as he was pleas'd to call, that admirable Person) once more into his power, he would never strive again to reclaim her by the fear of Infamy (a thing which, said he, I perceiv'd She despis'd) but by the terror of death; Supposing, as he added, that She would not fly from an Altar, to a Scaffold or a Stake; and resolving, in case She were inflexible, to Sacrifice her to the indignation of those Incens'd Deity's, She had so Obstinately provok'd.

The former part of this Discourse, which related to *Didymus*, his Excellent Mistress heard not, without such inward Commotions,

Commotions, that in Spight of the Calmness and reservedness of her temper, they clearly enough disclos'd themselves in her face, by several Changes of Colour, which those that had lately admir'd the greatness of her Courage, could not but ascribe to that of her concern for her distressed Lover. But when the Relator had concluded that part of his Narrative, that directly regarded her self, tho' it fill'd all the Auditors with grief and terrour, *Theodora* seem'd to have gain'd a new life; Since in her looks, the visible tokens of a deep sadness, were succeeded by no less manifest Signs of joy.

While the rest of those to whom the Melancholy account was given, were entertaining one another with the reflections they made upon it; *Irene* having drawn her fair friend aside, was impatient to learn the cause of that pleasing change, she had observ'd in her looks.

Whilst, answers *Theodora*, I was listening to the report of the Eminent Danger, which the Generous *Didymus* was Expos'd to for my Sake, I could not but be Extreemly Troubled, to find my Self restrain'd from attempting his Rescue, by the manifest Danger, of being by the Barbarous President sent back to the infamous place, whence your vertuous friend

frend had ventur'd so much to free me :
But now that the Judge, by a solemn
Declaration, has tyed up his own hands
from tempting me, by so justifiable a fear
as that of Infamy ; 'twas no wonder my
Looks disclos'd some Tokens of a joy,
grounded upon so welcom an opportuni-
ty to exercise my Gratitude without ha-
zarding my Honour.

What *Theodora* ! saith *Irene*, as it were
Thunder-struck with this unexpected
answer ; do you put so small a value up-
on that wonderful Deliverance, that
scarce an hour ago you did so devoutly
and deservedly give Thanks for, *that* you
will so soon rush into greater dangers,
than those that requir'd little less than a
miracle to rescue you from them ?

I hope, replies calmly *Theodora* that I
shall never forget, nor without a deep
sense remember, the admirable rescue
you speak of. But I take the most graci-
ous part of that Deliverance, to consist
in my being rescu'd from Dishonour ;
and think it would be much less oblig-
ing than it is, if it debar'd me from the
surest and directest ways to Glory ; and
if, to preserve my external Purity, it did
condemn me to Ingratitude, towards
the meritorious Instrument of that Pre-
servation.

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Our Lives, saith *Irene*, being trusted to us, as well as vouchsaf'd us, by God; are not so much at our own disposal, that 'tis allowable for us to part with them, as we think fit: And 'tis possible for us to abandon them, not only when we do directly and violently rid our selves of them, but when we do those things, whose natural Consequence is an untimely Death.

I believe with you, saith *Theodora*, that our Lives are to be reckon'd among those Goods that we are entrusted with, rather as Stewards than unaccountable Proprietors; and acknowledge too, that certain actions, that do not directly, may yet criminally, tend to their destruction. But I do not think the care of our Lives is committed to us, as that of our Souls is, with so indispensable an obligation to keep them; that it can never upon any terms whatsoever, be lawful for us to loose them. For, I think Life to be a Talent, which is indeed to be carefully husbanded and preserv'd; but is committed to us, not so much to keep safe, as to negotiate with; and is entrusted to us in order to a condition better than it self. And therefore, if Religion, or Vertue, require any thing at our hands, which cannot be perform'd without endangering

ing, or even loosing our Lives, in that case to venture them, or to part with them, is a duty; and consequently at least a justifiable action: And this pursues *Theodora*, I take to be my case; who am summon'd by Faithfulness to a just Promise, and by Gratitude to an extraordinary Benefactor, to endeavour the saving of an innocent Person, who is accus'd on my account, and has brought himself into a great danger, only for having most obligingly Rescu'd me from a greater.

But what, replies *Irene*, if the attempt you design, is far more likely to destroy you, than to save *Didymus*? For the barbarous Judge, is so much an Enemy to all Christians. as such, and so much incens'd against You, for your Escape, and Him for having been the Author of it; that the Cruelty of that inexorable man, will make him gladly destroy you both, as far as humane pow'r and rage can do it. And so, without preserving to the Church of *Antioch*, one of its Ornaments, you will deprive it of another, and a greater; by denying it the Influence it might receive, by so lasting an Exemplary a Vertue, as may justly be expected in a person so pious, and so young, as *Theodora*.

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The Experience, answers *Theodora*, that this very day has afforded me, forbids me to distrust Divine Providence; and keeps me from despairing to find my endeavours to rescue your Kinsman, successful; if the Most Wise and Good, as well as Absolute Disposer of Events, shall not think it less our advantage, to be repriv'd than crown'd. Without presuming therefore, to foresee Events, 'tis my part to do what God has vouchsafed to put into my power: and 'tis not my duty to rescue *Didymus*, but it is to attempt it; and thereby acquit my self as far as I am able, of what I owe to my promise, and my gratitude. If I had the vanity to think, adds she, that in a person of my Sex and Frailties, such a Church as that of *Antioch*, could be much concern'd; I should think too, that the attempt I am about to make, were the best way to make my life somewhat significant. For, whereas our heathen Adversaries are so blinded with Prejudices, that they look upon all we do or suffer for Christianity, as the effects of a kind of Superstitious Frenzy, that seizes us, and transports us, whenever the Articles of our Faith are contended for: My exposing my self to their fury, rather than be wanting to the dictates of Gratitude, which

which they, as well as we, look on as a Moral Vertue, may help to convince them, that our love to Vertue is general, and more disinterested, than they thought it: Since Christians can venture and part with their Lives, as well to shun Ingratitude, as to resist Idolatry.

This gratitude, (replies Irene) whose excess gives you and us, so much trouble, is a relative thing; and Benefits or Services receiv'd, ought to be requited by Actions, that are acceptable to those, they are design'd to gratify; but sure, not by such, as we know will be unwelcome to them. And therefore (continues she) the faithfulest, and most disinterested of your Servants, will be far more unhappy, than the *Roman* Cruelty can make him, if what he has done, doth not convince you, that he can never look upon any thing, as a favour or retribution to him, that shall destroy, or so much as endanger, his adored Mistress.

I were very unworthy (rejoyns Theodora) if I did not think *Didymus* capable of the highest Sentiments that Generosity and friendship can inspire: But he is too just, to forbid those he loves, to aspire to some share of those noble Qualities; upon whose account, I am to consider, not so much what his Vertue will relish,

relish, as what his condition requires ; there being a sort of Debts, to which mine to him belong, that ought to be the more carefully paid, the more frankly they are remitted.

The sorrowful *Irene*, being exceeding troubled, to see her endeavours unsuccessful, on an occasion, upon which of all others, she most wish'd to find them prevalent, was prompted by her grief, to bring her Eyes to the assistance of her Tongue ; and weeping, said to her inflexible Mistress ; If, Madam, you will not have any compassion for the excellent *Theodora*, at least take some pity upon the disconsolate *Irene* ; and if her *Arguments* cannot move you, be not at least inexorable to her *Fears*. You have (continues she) vouchsaf'd me the honour of your Friendship, and the Happiness of of your Conversation ; and by both these blessings, have given me so much esteem and kindness for so great a benefactor, that if you deny me, what I now implore, you will turn the noblest parts of my happiness upon Earth, into instruments of my Infelicity ; since, in a World depriv'd of *Theodora*, the desolate *Irene*, will Languish, rather than Live, if she should be able to survive so great a Loss.

Theodora, whose Resolution and good Nature

Nature were both of them extraordinary, though she had courage enough to support calmly her own personal Sufferings, yet she had tenderness enough to be very sensible of those of her Friends. And the moving expressions of the sorrowful *Irene*, together with the Tears that accompany'd them, made such an impression on her, that though, having foreseen this Storm, it did not surprize her, yet it did much distress her, and let her see, how many uneasy Victories she was to gain, before she could triumphantly compleat that days work. And though after a short, but sharp, Conflict, between her kindness and her Resolution, the latter of them prevail'd, yet, 'twas not without some Reluctancy and Commotion, that she was able to return this Answer. Ah, dear *Irene*, do not exercise so much Cruelty your self, whilst you reproach me for being Cruel ; and do not add to the great affliction of parting with such a Friend as *Irene*, that of seeing her so much troubled on my account, and of seeing my self necessitated to the uneasy Task of denying a Request of hers. If what I owe to my Religion, and to your generous Cousin, would suffer me upon any terms, to alter the Resolves it prompted me to ; the declaration of your desire
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to have me do it, would have made all the Arguments you employ'd to perswade me to it, unnecessary. 'Tis true, that among Vertuous Friends, kindness may challenge much, but not to the prejudice of Conscience and Reputation. I hope our Friendship is not, and am sure it ought not to be, barely a mutual fondness of two young Virgins; but that virtue had a greater share in making and continuing it, than Sympathy and Inclination had. And 'tis but just, that a friendship, grounded chiefly upon Virtue, should be govern'd and regulated by it. Permit me therefore (pursues she) with that freedom and plainness, that our Friendship allows, to put you in mind, that in the straits wherein Providence has now placed us, it calls upon us to consider, not only that we are *Friends*, but, that we are *Christians* too; who ought in reason, as well for our departing as our departed Friends, to listen to the Apostle of us *Gentiles*, who 1 *Thess* 4. 13. forbids us, upon the removal of those we love, to give up our selves to sorrow, as those that have no hope. Indeed, if we were *Epicureans*, that believe the Soul as mortal, as the Body; or such other Pagans, as bury in the Graves of their Friends, the hopes,

hopes, or at least the confidence, of meeting them again: we could scarce too bitterly deplore a Separation, that would certainly, or at least for ought we knew, prove an Eternal one. But having, through the Goodness of God being embracers of the Gospel, and enabled, though but imperfectly, yet sincerely to live according to its Dictates, and be ready to die for its defence; the same Grace may keep us from fearing, that the time of our separation will be lasting enough, to bear any considerable proportion to that Eternity, which will be allow'd us to enjoy each others Company in. And give me leave to tell you, *Irene*, that I cannot rejoyce at any expressions, even of your kindness, that are injurious to your Piety, and bring your love of me, into a competition with that, which ought to be as unparallel'd as its Object is. They love a Creature too much, that think it too good to be parted with, for the Creators service. 'Tis a high injury to him, to think, we can lose any thing for him, that he cannot make us a rich amends for. And I must not conceal my Opinion, that a Christian disparages both himself and his profession, if he complains, that any loss can make him unhappy, while he possesses the favour of God. Wherefore, my

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dearest

dearest *Irene* (concludes *She*) let your Friendship alleviate *my* Grief, by shewing me how handsomly you bear *your own*; and prefer, I beseech you, upon this sad occasion, the exercise of the more *generous*, to that of the more *tender*, Effects of Kindness.

Alas, Madam, says the distress'd *Irene*, all the fine things you say to comfort me, produce in me, an Effect quite contrary to that you design by them; since they do but the more discover the Excellency and Kindness of the incomparable Person I am going to be depriv'd of; after whose company, I shall find that of the rest of the World, too insipid, so much as to divert me: and therefore, if you will not grant me the Blessing of Living with you, at least do not deny me the satisfaction of Dying with you. For, though Martyrdom be very formidable to a frail Woman, yet Heaven is more desirable to a Christian; and I shall not fear to take a Scaffold or a Stake in my way, when I travel to such a Place, as That, in such Company as yours.

You know (replies *Theodora*) as well as I, that our Religion commands us to suffer Martyrdom, when we are oblig'd to do it; but forbids us to thrust our selves unnecessarily upon so fatal and difficult a work: The Apostles themselves, whose
peculiar

peculiar Office it was, to be the Heralds and Champions of the Gospel, were commanded, when they were persecuted in one City, to fly into another; and accordingly one of the most couragious of them, to avoid needless and unseasonable dangers, fled to *Jerusalem* from *Damascus*; *Act. 19. 25.* though to do so, He was fain to be let down from the wall of this Place in a Basket. And 'tis but reasonable, we should not, without a manifest Call of Providence, venture upon a Conflict, in which we do so much depend upon extraordinary Assistances for the Victory, that the same bold Disciple, that so confidently promis'd our Saviour, that He would die for Him, was in an hour or two, the first that renounc'd him. An inspir'd Teacher, who was ambitious to be, as He afterwards prov'd a Martyr, reckons it to be the Gift of God, not only to Believe in Christ, but to suffer for that Belief. If (continues She) our Conditions were exchang'd, and *Irene*, instead of me, were by Divine Providence singl'd out for Martyrdom; I should not envy Her the Glory, of letting many of both Religions see, that Christianity can elevate the Courage of a Woman, to a degree that they think appropriated to Men. I would em-

ploy my Prayers rather to obtain of Heaven, a divine Support of Her Resolution, than an inglorious Change of it. And imitating that well natur'd *Israelite*, who, not only willingly but gladly, parted with his dear *Ester*, when She went from Him to a Throne; I should be more satisfied with *Irene's* Advancement, than with Her Company: And if I did not prefer Her Happiness to my Own, it would be, because indeed I should look upon them so united, that I should find Mine in Hers. Let me then (says *Theodora*) conjure you, by all our past and future Friendship, rather to congratulate, than lament, the Remove I am going to make. And be not troubled, that one whom you have been pleas'd so much to Love, is call'd to be early happy. In such hazardous times as these, you know not how soon a Persecutor's Sword may send you after Her. And at most, this Mortal Life is too short, to let our Separation be very long. And in the mean time, the comfortable Expectation of an unchangeable state, of whose Blessedness the renewed Fruition of each other, will make a Part, and not the greatest neither: may Console you for the absence of a Person, that in the *interim* will be happy enough to wish You where She is,
upon

upon much juster grounds than you can with Her where She *was*. Let it then (concludes *Theodora*, with weeping eyes,) be a sufficient proof of my Esteem and Love of *Irene*, that I part from Her with Tears, when I am going to a Place, where the Divine Oracles assure us, that *all Tears shall be wip'd* Rev. 7. 17. *from our Eyes*, and be succeeded by a *Fulness of Joy*, that *shall last for evermore*. Mal. 16. 11.

CHAP. VI.

THOUGH these Reasonings were such, as *Irene* knew not well how to answer, yet, being incapable of acquiescing in any Discourse, that inferr'd it to be her duty, to part with *Theodora*; she resolv'd to try; whether the perswasions of the company (which she knew, would be very forward to assist her) would not be more prevalent, than hers had been: And that seem'd an accident very friendly to her design, that just then happen'd, by the arrival of an intelligent Gentleman, whom she had a while before employ'd to learn News of her Friend; and who, on that score, had been a curious and heedful Spectator, of all that had

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pass'd,

pass'd, at the presidents, in relation to *Didymus*, and was come to bring *Irene* an account of it. To hear this, she and her sorrowful Friend were desir'd to re-joyn the rest of the company: To which, the high and just esteem they all had of so brave a Gentleman, as *Didymus*, gave an impatient desire to be inform'd of his Adventures. To satisfy this Curiosity, the Gentleman that was to do it, did, after a short pause, make them the following Narrative.

I suppose this company needs not be informed by me, of what happen'd to the generous *Didymus*, between the time, that the excellent *Theodora* was condemn'd to an infamous place, and that wherein he had the happiness, of helping her to make an escape out of it. And therefore without wasting any of that little time whereof, I fear, we may have but too great need, I shall proceed to inform you, that when this astonishment, occasion'd by this Surprise, of finding a Young man in the escap'd Virgins Room, was a little over, and they had cloath'd *Didymus* in a habit more decent, to appear in, before a publick Assembly; they led him away to the Judge: to whom some of them related, maliciously enough, what had pass'd, earnestly begging Justice,

Justice of him, against a Person, who (they said) could not but be a Christian; and who was not content, to be himself an Offender against the Laws, but had dared to rescue another Offender, from the Punishment to which they had doom'd her.

Against this Charge, the undaunted *Didymus* being ask'd, what Defence he had to make, addressing himself to the Judge, made this resolute answer. I stand accus'd of a twofold Crime of being a Christian, and of *Theodora's* Rescue: And though I cannot so soon have forgot, how heinous my Accusers have endeavour'd to make them appear, yet, instead of denying either of them, I shall own, that I glory in both.

As for Christianity, in an Age, wherein it is so cruelly Persecuted, I would not have embraced the profession of it, but that I was resolv'd, if there were occasion, to suffer for it. And therefore I shall neither deny what they call a Crime, nor make an Apology for it, nor deprecate any *Infliction*, (for so I call it, rather than *Punishment*, which still supposes a fault) whereto it can expose me. Nor could I, without being wanting to the duty of Humanity, refuse my assistance, to preserve the purity of so noble a Shrine of

E. 4 Chastity,

Chastity, as the Savage designers of a Rape on *Theodora*, were going barbarously to violate. And the inward satisfaction of having done what became me on such occasions, will support me under any Sufferings, that shall be drawn upon me, but by my Loyalty to persecuted Truth, and my compassion of distress'd Vertue.

The experience I have had (answers the *President*) of the effects of those desperate Errours, you miscall *Religion*, makes me inclinable enough, to think, that you, as well as many others of your wild Sect, have both Madness and Impiety enough, to put off the Apprehensions, as well as the other common sentiments, of Human Nature, and fear *Death*, as little as you do the *Gods*. But since you pretend to be more vertuous Men, and obedient Subjects, than others; pray tell me, what you can say, for your rescuing a Malefactor, out of the hands of those Ministers of Justice, that were going to Execute the sentence of Condemnation upon her.

If (replies *Didymus*) the Sentence you speak of, had doom'd her but to Death; though I should most gladly have suffer'd it in her stead, yet I had deplor'd your Cruelty, without attempting to defeat it.

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But I confess, I could not without Indignation, as well as Grief, see such a person as *Theodora*, who for her Beauty, Vertue, and other Perfections, is justly admir'd by all that knew her, and look'd upon as the honour of her Sex; most injuriously condemn'd to so infamous and barbarous an usage, as were unfit for the meanest and despicablest of Creatures, that belong to the Sex (whereof she is the Ornament.) And considering with myself, that Chastity in Women, and especially in Virgins, is so much a Vertue, and their right to preserve it, so confess'dly inherent, that all Nations agree, in ascribing to them a right to defend it, without reserve, against whosoever attempts to deprive them of; it I concluded, that to help a distressed Virgin to preserve so acknowledg'd a right, was to defeat Ravishers, rather than to oppose Magistrates, and not commit a Crime, but hinder the accomplishing of one. Nor could I think, that 'twas against the *Roman* Judges I acted, when I oppos'd Persons, whom their Savage design made me look upon as the worst sort of *Barbarians*. And I did not doubt Sir (continues *Didymus*) that in your own Breast, when calmer thoughts shall come there, to succeed those that lately possess'd it, I

shall be absolv'd from an action, which kept you from dishonouring your self as much, as the execution of your Sentence would have defil'd *Theodora*; and kept you innocent as to Act, from what would have made you Enemies for ever, not only of the fairest half of Mankind, but of all those of our Sex, that retain any Sparks either of Vertue, or good Nature.

If *Theodora* (replies the *President*) were not a Beauty, and one of your obstinate Sect, I doubt you would never, for her sake, have adventur'd upon so desperate an Attempt, as makes you, not more Disobedient, than Obnoxious, to the Law.

I see not, Sir (rejoyns *Didymus*) why it should be a disparagement to *Theodora's* Beauty, or to the impressions I have receiv'd of it, that all that it has engaged me to do, has been, with the utmost hazard of my Life, To rescue her Purity, and deny my self, in the first place, the advantages I endeavour'd to deprive others of. But the Charms of her Mind, needed not those of her Face, to make me attempt to preserve her. I have often in Camps contended, not without hazard enough, with my victorious fellow-Soldiers, to keep them from violating the

the Chastity of Captives, who had neither Beauty to Captivate others, nor any thing else to engage me in their Quarrel, except their being innocent and distressed Women. But *Theodora*; setting her Beauty and Birth aside, has been so eminent, for all the good Qualities and Excellencies that can accomplish a Person of her Sex, and especially, for her Chastity, that my Heart would have reproach'd me for not prizing Vertue enough, if I had declin'd so happy an Opportunity, to express the veneration I paid so shining a one, as Hers. But (pursues *Didymus*) I would not by what I have said, be thought to deny, that my Religion had a share in the attempt I made to serve a Person, that did so much adorn it, and was so loyal to it. The Christian Doctrine, among many other excellent things, that it prescribes to its embracers, teaches them, that in some cases, among which others is compriz'd, they Ought to lay down their Lives for one another. But Sir 1 John, 3. 16. (concludes *Didymus*) you may be pleas'd to take notice, that what I acted, was according to the Rules of it too. For I did not oppose the Execution of your cruel Sentence, by force, but only prevented it by an innocent Stratagem,

Stratagem, whereby my ends were obtain'd without Bloodshed or Violence ; no Mans Life having been so much as endanger'd, except my own ; which I never thought my self bound to preserve from any Danger, that Piety or Humanity summon'd me to undertake.

Though the *President* could not but be sensible, that *Didymus* had said more for himself, than was expected ; yet, that he might not be thought to be satisfied with the Defence of a Person, whom he meant to condemn, he told him ; I do not think it strange, that those who dare call the very Worship of the Gods, *Superstition* and *Idolatry*, and that which all Men but your selves call *Impiety*, *Religion*, should stile *Rebellion* against the *Magistrate* ; *Loyalty* to the Truth. But how industriously soever you strive, not only to cloak a Criminal action, but transform it into a Vertuous one ; I can easily, through all its disguises, perceive the disobedience and refractoriness to Civil Government, that is so contagious, and so spread among the embracers of your Sect ; that Princes have no other way, but your Ruine, to secure their own Safety, which would be quickly endanger'd, if your powers and numbers were half as great, as the disloyalty of your Principles and Practices. To

To be a Sufferer for my Religion (answers *Didymus*) is that, which I shall not so properly submit to, with Resignation, as Embrace, with Joy. But to find my Religion a sufferer with me, if not for me; and to see Christianity made a State Crime, while it severely prohibits and condemns all Crimes, and none more expressly, than disobedience to the just commands of Magistrates; is that, which I confess, do's not a little trouble me. And therefore, Sir, I hope you will allow a Person, that is much more concerned to keep his Religion than himself, from being endanger'd by this Accusation; to give you a righter apprehension, than our Calumniators have done, of the innocentest, as well as the truest, Religion in the World.

Though for my part (continues *Didymus*) I think, that the liberty of serving God, by such ways as are not repugnant to the Light, or Laws of Nature, or the welfare of civil Societys, is the common right of Mankind, and cannot be denied Man, without Injustice; yet I do not now plead for it: and you are more concern'd to look to that, than I. For if you make me suffer, for the innocent use of that Right, which God and Nature have granted unto all men; I shall but under-
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go a Transient Punishment, but you will expose your self, to an Eternal, and (which is worse) to a deserved one. No Persons in the World, can pay more Obedience to the Laws of their Superiours, than Christians do. We that can shed the Enemies Blood, and hazard our own, as freely, and perhaps as succesfully, as any Soldiers in your Armies, suffer you to shed ours, as tamely as any sheep you have in your folds. And sure, we are very unhappy, as well as you very incredulous, that those Professions of Loyalty and Obedience, that are not more visibly written in our Books, than frequently sign'd with our Blood, cannot gain Credit with you; nor our death it self convince you, when the wounds that we quietly suffer to pierce our Breasts, would open you Windows into our hearts, if some had not a greater mind to peirce them, than to know them. But the same just care we have to obey Authority, what rate soever the submissions cost us, forbids us to do those things for the refusal whereof, Authority condemns us. For God being, as the only Creator, so the Supreme Governor of man, his Laws are those of the truest Supreme Authority: and Princes themselves being his Subjects, and but his Lieutenants upon Earth; to
decline

decline their commands, when ever they prove repugnant unto his, is not so much an Act of disobedience to the Subordinate power, as of Loyalty to the supreme and universal Sovereign. And in such cases we are no more Rebels against the Emperor, when we prefer the performance of Gods Laws, to a compliance with his, than we should be, in case we should disobey the orders of the Governor of the Province we live in, if they should prove repugnant to those of *Augustus*. And even in these cases; if we cannot yield an *Active obedience* to the commands of the Civil Sovereign, we do not refuse him, the utmost we can consent to, which is *Passive obedience*: and when our consciences permit us not to do those to us unlawful things, that he commands, they enjoyn us to suffer unresistedly, whatever penalties he pleases to impose. And give me leave Sir, to add (so *Didymus* continues) that we are so far, from making Religion a Cloak to the pursuit of present advantages, that you daily see us renounce them all, and our lives to boot, to maintain our Loyalty to our Maker, without hopes of being recompens'd, but in another World; and even there we cannot expect any, but by the sentence of a Judge, whom none
can

can either bribe or deceive, and who is more severe to crimes, than any Persecutor on Earth can be, to Innocents. I will not tell you, pursues *Didymus*, that on the other side, the assurance we have of the inestimable rewards laid up in heaven, for Loyalty to God and his Truths, and the internal applauses of a good conscience, are things of so elevating and satisfying a nature, that our Religion can make the hearts it possesses, not only detest the Ambition of those Subjects, that aspire to Earthly Crowns, but perhaps, pity the condition of those Princes, that possess them. But I dare, Sir, avow, that the harmlesness of our Principles, is not more legible in our Profession than in our Practices and Sufferings. For the multitude of *Christians* is so great, that [in your Cities, your Country, your Courts of Justice, *Tertul.* your Camps, and all places of Publick Resort, except your Temples, they are not only present, but numerous ;] and your Enemies, as well as your Armies, have been sufficiently convinc'd, they know as well how to Kill, as Dye ; so that 'tis only because we will not forfeit our Innocence, by a forbidden way of defending it, that we are expos'd to such cruel Sufferings for it. And I doubt not

not but equitable Estimators of things will conclude, that our calmly submitting to such inhuman Usages, sufficiently shews, that we do not deserve them.

The Judge, discerning still more clearly, that his discourses made much less impressions upon *Didymus*, than those of *Didymus* did upon the Hearers; resolv'd to break off this kind of Conversation, and with a stern Countenance, told the Prisoner, that 'twas high time for him to remember, that he was a Judge, and not a Priest; and that therefore, though his compassion had hitherto invited him to employ Persuasions, yet now their unsuccessfulness oblig'd him to declare positively, that he was sure the Gods, that he and the world worship'd, were the true ones; and that if *Didymus* did not forthwith, acknowledge them to be so, by Sacrificing to them, he should quickly feel their power by being put to a death, his obstinacy made him both deserve, and appear fond of.

Didymus, without seeming to be at all mov'd at this rough Language, calmly as well as resolutely, reply'd.

Tho' Sir, I am most ready, whenever I am call'd to it, to Suffer for my Religion, yet I would not be thought to expose my self, for an obstinate Denial, to hear
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and consider, what may be objected against it. We *Christians*, whatever wilfulness may be misimputed to us, are not so fond of Sufferings, or of our own Conceits, as not to be more willing to have them brought to the Bar, than to be condemn'd there for them: And persecuted Opinions are things, which, as we do not renounce, so we do not embrace, for their being such. Nor are we so blind and wilful, as to reject clear Arguments, that would both instruct us and rescue us too, if any such could be propos'd, by the Embracers of your Religion.

This I say, Sir, continues *Didymus*, not to contradict what you were saying, of your being not a Priest but a Judge; but to clear Constancy, from the imputation of Obstinacy, and declare, that if we could see Reasons on your side, fitted to deliver us from Error, and from death, we would not be so mad, or so perverse, as to chuse rather to renounce Life, than embrace Truth. But pardon me, Sir (subjoyns he) if I think, that though you are commission'd by the Supreme Power, to be a Judge for Life and Death, yet you are not constituted by the Supreme Verity, a Judge of Truth and Falshood. And therefore, I take your owning to worship many Gods who, by
their

their very being many Deities, are sufficiently proved not to be true ones; for a Declaration of *your* Opinion, not a Demonstration that it ought to be *mine* too. If you press us with Arguments, we are ready to answer yours, and offer you ours: But when instead of them, you employ Threats, we do not think it proper to argue against them, but to despise them; since 'tis not our Reason that they Assault, but our Constancy. And therefore, give me leave to tell you, Sir, concludes *Didymus*, that the *Christian* Religion can so fortifie and elevate the Mind, and place it so much above the reach of a Political Jurisdiction, that I shall suffer your Sentence with far less trouble, than you will soon or late feel, at the remembrance of your having pronounced it; and you will not find it in the power of all your executed threats, to ruine either my Constancy, or so much as my Joy.

The Judge, enrag'd, to see his Power thus despis'd, and as he interpreted it, affronted, by a Prisoner declar'd, he would defer no longer than one hour (which space he allow'd him to repent his Errors in,) to pronounce against him the fatal Sentence, and commanded him to be immediately led to the place, where

where 'twas to be executed ; towards which he himself intended to follow at some distance: Whether it were to feed his cruel Eyes with a Spectacle, whose tragicalness his revenge would make acceptable to him ; or to prevent any Tumult or Disorders, that the Courage of *Didymus*, and the esteem and pity it had excited in the numerous by-standers, might possibly occasion.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

AS soon as the Gentleman, that made the past Discourse, had ended it, the just Idea it form'd in the minds of the hearers, and especially of the two Ladies, of the singular Piety and heroick Courage of *Didymus*, made such an impression on the grateful and compassionate *Theodora*, as exceedingly heightned her resolution to rescue him, if it were possible, and hastened her to begin immediately to attempt it. In order to which, having observ'd that the hearers listen'd so attentively to what the Relator said, that they then minded nothing else, she took that nick of time to withdraw herself silently, into another room; and by a pair of back stairs, convey'd herself out of the house: Whence by indirect ways (for fear of being overtaken in the shortest,) she went with as much hast and gladness, to an almost certain death, as others are wont to shun and escape it with; leaving *Irene* and her other friends, no less amaz'd than troubl'd, when sometime afterward, they perceiv'd her missing, and found all the diligence they employ'd to retrieve her, fruitless.

fruitless. For, *Theodora*, fearing she could not long escape the diligence of her Pursuers, unless she hasten'd to a place, where he justly thought they would not follow her; delay'd not to go directly towards the Company, that she was told attended the *President*, in the affairs that were transacting in his Court. Among these Attendants, she had not staid long, before she discry'd her brave Lover, under a strict and rude Guard; but with a look so manly, and so serene, as shew'd, that he deserv'd another usage; and was not in the least daunted nor discompos'd by that he met with. This moving Sight, so affected the generous and compassionate *Theodora*, that tho' in so publick place and manner, she could with less reluctancy dye for *Didymus*, than she could plead for him; yet her gratitude surmounting her bashfulness, after some conflict within herself, she made towards the Tribunal; to which she found a more easie passage than she expected. For, the advantageous of her shape and stature, and gracefulness of her motions, easily produc'd for her, such Sentiments, in the admiring by-standers, as made them with great respect, give her way, and let her, without disturbance, pass on to the Bar. She had but a very little while staid

staid there, before the *President* was mov'd, by the concurrence of those whom Curiosity and Wonder invited to gaze on the fair stranger, to cast his eyes on Her ; and notwithstanding the unlikelihood, that she should appear there, without having been Forcibly brought thither ; as soon as, out of respect to his Dignity, she had lifted up her Veil, he discern'd that it was she, by a sort of Beauty so peculiar, as was not easily either to be met with in others, or to be forgotten by any that had ever seen it.

But, though the Judge were thus surpriz'd at her presence, yet he little less admir'd her Courage than her Beauty, when, with a Face, wherein the Blushes of her Cheeks, and the Assuredness of her Looks, equally discover'd her Modesty and her Fearlessness, she told him: I know, Sir, that 'tis a very unusual thing, for a Person of my Sex and Religion, to come to this Place unsent for. But I hope you will be pleas'd to consider, that, as the *Action* is extraordinary, the *Occasion* of it is so too. For both Justice, the Virtue that you sit here to distribute ; and Gratitude, founded upon the highest Obligations, engage me to appear before you, on the behalf of that brave Prisoner, (at which words she pointed at *Didymus*,) and

and present you the Object, on which you may inflict with Legal Justice, what you cannot make him suffer, without being tax'd of Cruelty. For supposing a Debt to be due to the Law, yet it would be more Severe than Just, to prosecute the Security, now the Principal offers to pay the Debt. He may well be look'd upon as my Hostage, whom I now come to redeem: And 'tis not, Sir, your interest, to decline the Exchange, since by it you will preserve a Person, whose Courage, engag'd by his Gratitude, may do signal Service in the Roman Army. And since my Escape, was all his Crime, I beseech you, let my surrender of *my self*, obtain *his* absolution.

Here *Theodora* paus'd a while, partly to recover from the Disorder, so unusual and difficult an Effort of her Modesty had put her into; and partly, to observe the Judges Countenance, upon his hearing what she had said, and to take measures thence in what she was further to speak. The *President* in the mean time continued silent, whether the longer to hear the musick of her Voice, or because so many Charms, as nature had croud'd in her Face, and so much sadness, as her concern for her *Lover* had display'd in her Looks, had somewhat mollify'd him, as they might have

have done a Tiger. Whereupon the fair *Suppliant*, hoping that his not interrupting her, proceeded from some relenting Thoughts, resumes her Discourse, in these terms. But if, Sir, to procure the dismissal of this *Gentleman*, your Justice had need to be seconded by your Clemency, perhaps you never had, nor never will have, an Object whose merit may so well warrant the fullest Exercise of it. For his Life, ever since he bore Arms, has been imploy'd in the Service of his Princes, and fearlessly hazarded for their Greatness. And the Action for which he is now in trouble, is so Heroick, and so disinterested an one of Courage and Compassion, that in it he could scarce have any other motive, than the Greatness of his *Generosity*, nor other End, than the Exercise of it. Nor need you fear, that your Clemency on this occasion should introduce a bad Example ; for this of *Didymus* is never like to be imitated, nor can be so, but by Persons too virtuous to be Delinquents. And if such Actions be Criminal, at least 'tis unlikely they will grow common Crimes. And here *Theodora*, perceiving that the impatient *Didymus* (now come again to himself, after the astonishing surprize, this Adventure gave him) was upon the point

to interrupt her, she thus prevents him. And you, brave *Didymus*, forbear to oppose the accomplishment of my just Desires. The course that I now take, is the only that I could take, to evidence my Gratitude, and to let you see, that you have not exercis'd the noblest Acts of Generosity and Friendship, towards a Person insensible of the Dictates of those Vertues. I could not (continues she) but be glad to be rescu'd from the Ignominy of a Rape, but I did not intend to be robb'd of the Glory of Suffering for Christ; which is also the only means left me to evince, that I Declin'd Dishonor, and not Death, and never meant so much to disoblige the World, as for the sake of an insignificant Maid, to deprive it of one of the most generous of Men. You have left your self but one way to encrease your past favours, which is, to allow me the only real Expression I can make of my sense of them, and that in such a way, as can, at most, but make some little Diminution of them, without pretending to make a Retribution for them. If therefore (concludes she) you will compleat the Obligation you have laid on me, by preserving to me the Coronet of Virginity, you must not oppose my obtaining the Crown of Martyrdom.

Didymus

Didymus had need of all the Respect, that he paid his admirable Mistress, to keep him thus long, from interrupting a Discourse, that tended so little to his satisfaction; and therefore she had no sooner put a period to it, than (with a deep sigh) he told her; Cease, *Theodora*, cease, to plead for the continuance of Life, that you are almost as cruel to *me*, in thus endeavouring to preserve, as you are, in thus hazarding *your own*. And if I durst not hope for, from the *President*, more than I see I must on this occasion, expect from *You*; I should think my self as perfectly wretched, as (whatsoever your intentions be) your proceedings are unkind. But I am confident, our unbyas'd Judge is too impartial, not to discern in your Discourse, that the excess of your Goodness, has had the chief interest in the management of your Plea; the case about which *we* differ, being in it self so clear, that alone to state it, is sufficient to Plead it on *my* Behalf. For I entic'd you to escape out of Prison, and then, at my own peril, facilitated to you the means of doing so: You leave me behind, as a Pawn to the Laws, and these finding me in your room, make their great Minister, before whose Tribunal we stand, doom *me*, for *your* Offence, to the Death de-

sign'd for your Punishment: Which since I joyfully proffer my self to suffer for you; or rather, since you suffer it in me your Proxy; the illustrious *President* is too well acquainted with his Office, to need to be told, that, at least in Equity the *Surety's* Payment discharges the *Principal* from the Debt; especially, when he not only proffers the Payment, but most earnestly desires the acceptance of it, as a great advantage to him. I hope then, Great Sir, says he (turning himself to the *President*, with additional Respect to that he had shew'd him before) that you will accept of my Life, instead of hers, who deserves a long and happy one; and that, when my Sentence of Condemnation shall be pronounc'd, and gladly acquiesc'd in, it may Free her, I am Condemn'd for. The love of Self-preservation is so natural, that it cannot be made Capital, without affronting Nature, and punishing as well what Men are, as what the do: And the love of Purity and Honour does so much become a Chast Virgin, that the natural consequences of it are too Commendable to be fit to be made Penal. 'Tis I who having despis'd Dangers that I might easily have avoided, when 'twas a Question to do an illegal thing, do yet glory in the Crime,

Crime, that am the just and proper Object of the rigour of your Laws: And her Years are yet so tender, and her Disposition so innocent, that since, if she have err'd, it was by my persuasions, if she be to be punish'd, it should be in my person. All that she has since alledg'd to appropriate my guilt, or involve herself in it, will, I hope, by a *Roman* Magistrate be look'd on, as it is indeed, as an argument of her generosity, and not of her crime. And the *Romans* are too much friends to gallantry, to punish in a Lady, that Vertue, that they applaud and crown even in Soldiers.

But now, continues *Didymus*, I must address my self to you, O *Theodora*: And must complain of, or at least deplore, my infelicity; that after I had done and suffer'd, all that I could, though 'twas much less than I would, for the preservation of so dear a Life as yours; you come now to hazard it, to make mine end with sorrow. But granting you should prevail, in the no less unwelcome than generous Attempt, you are pleas'd to make; how cruel were you, to envy me at once, the two highest Honours, that my Ambition aspir'd to; the Glory of Martyrdom, and that of *Theodoras* Rescue? Had I as many lives as you have ver-

tues, I should esteem them all but a cheap ransom for a few hours of yours : So unlikely I am, and ought to be, to be either capable or desirous, of being preserv'd by your suffering for my actions. And therefore, Madam, if you think my little Services deserve some recompence ; since my highest contentments on earth, terminate in your happiness, there is no other way left you to reward them, but the care of your own preservation : It being the only return that I expect or desire of my Services, that you will not, by your inflexibleness, finally make them fruitless ; but be content to live for his sake, that will rejoyce to dye for yours.

All the while this noble Dispute lasted, the Judge was, though not an unconcern'd, yet a silent Hearer of it : The strange novelty of the contest, and no less extraordinary generosity and gracefulness of the Contenders, having given him an attention, that kept him from interrupting them. But when their debate had proceeded thus far ; his stern nature, whose actions had been but suspended by his curiosity, prompted him to tell the generous Couple ; I know not what presumption makes you plead, as if each of you were the others only Judge, and had the Supreme Authority
of

of condemning or absolving you; and I were only an unconcern'd auditor, or at least, fate here to ratifie the Sentence you shall agree upon, between your selves. But you will quickly find, to your cost, that the *Roman* Laws, and Magistrates, are not to be trifled with.

Great Sir, replies *Didymus*, you much misapprehend our Conduct, if you think your self slighted by it: For, 'twas not want of respect to your Authority, and Power, that made us discourse as we did; but a supposition, not injurious to you, that you would in the exercise of that Power, manifest that you deserve it, by tempering it with two excellent vertues, that best become a Magistrate, Equity and Clemency. This presumption, Sir, and not any disrespectful one, was that upon which we proceeded in our discourse; still taking it for granted, that you would not punish two, for that which was indeed, but the fault of one; and that if either of us were, by the others consent, to suffer; your Equity, or your Clemency, would prevail with you, to release the other.

Though *Didymus*, had worded what he said, so cautiously, that a discerning hearer might perceive, that his expressions related to the Judges Dignity, not

his person; yet that self-flattery, which is but too common an attendant on Men in Power, making the *President* take all these respectful words to himself, made him allow *Didymus*, without interruption, to proceed in his discourse, and say; you will easily grant, Sir, that Goodness, whereof Clemency is a noble part may bring a Magistrate, who is Heavens Vice-gerent upon Earth, as high a Veneration as Power or Greatness does; if you please to consider, that those of your Religion, when they would with the most deference speak of God, give the Title of *Most Good* the preference to that of *Most Great*, styling him, as the *Christians* likewise often do, *Deus Optimus maximus*. Certainly, Clemency is never more a virtue, nor less grudg'd at by Justice, than when 'tis exercis'd towards Vertuous Persons, by rescuing them from the persecutions of Fortune, and the unintended rigour of the Laws. I say *unintended rigour*, says *Didymus*, for I cannot think that the *Roman* Legislators that have honor'd injur'd Chastity so much in *Lucretia*, and encourag'd Gallantry and other Vertues, by no less than Crowns and Triumphs; meant to make the productions of Chastity, Constancy and Gratitude, Criminal things. And, tho'
Christians

Christians dissent from others in matters of Religion, yet those moral Vertues that were so esteem'd by the *Romans*, do not lose their nature, when practis'd by *Christians*: And those brave men, whose love to Vertue made them Masters of the World, did not scruple to honour it in their very Enemies; and did it so much, even in the most irreconcilable of them, that more than one or two Statues of *Hannibal* were erected at *Rome*; to which Triumphant City 'tis perhaps more glorious, to have thus honor'd him, than vanquish'd him. And sure they that thought *Lucretia's* Chastity merited so many Statues, would not think *Theodora's* deserv'd a Stake or a Scaffold. This Ladies actions and mine, are not so hainous, but that in happier persons, and milder times, they have been look'd on under a notion very differing from that of criminal ones. But Sir, continues *Didymus*, addressing himself to the *President*, in a very humble manner, if there must needs be offer'd up some sacrifice to appease the angry Laws, I beseech you to let their rigour be satisfied with my Blood, and spare this harmless Lady; to whom, if your compassion be needful, I hope you will not want it for an object, whose Excellencies cannot only

make it reasonable, but meritorious. For it will preserve to *Antioch* its fairest Ornament; and a Life so Exemplary, that to give it an untimely period, for actions, which, being laudable in their own nature, nothing but a rigid interpretation of the Law can make criminal, would be to make the Laws a terror, rather to the good than to the wicked. It would be thought inhumane to treat her as a delinquent, whom you may justly wish your daughters should resemble; when by the Grant of what I implore, you will be sure to receive both the thanks of her Sex, and the applause of ours, and what out-values both, the satisfaction of having sav'd and oblig'd one of the most admirable Persons in the world.

Didymus now perceiving, that the person he pleaded for, was preparing herself to interrupt him; readdress'd himself to her, and told her; do not, Madam, I beseech you, require of my obsequiousness, proofs inconsistent with my love; and add not to my infelicity, by putting me in so uneasy a condition, as to find it my duty to oppose your desires: Ah! refuse not to oblige the world, by preserving the most accomplish'd it can glory in; Deny me not the satisfaction, whereof I am so ambitious, of being the
happy

happy instrument of your deliverance; and then I may say, that I never could justly dye more seasonably than now, when being at the height of all my joys, my longer life must of necessity give an ebb to my felicity; since after the Glory of having sav'd *Theodora*, I hope for no higher on Earth, than that of dying for her. Then perceiving her ready to renew the Contest, he told her (with a low voice, that the Judge might not hear him, and with a sadness in his looks, which she, that knew his Courage, could impute to nothing but his almost boundless concern for her;) Madam, though the *Presidents* impatience did not call upon us to conclude our Contest yet my condition and resolution ought to put a hasty period to it: For, Madam, I must positively declare to you, that it would be as bootless as cruel, for you to think to protect my Life, by the abandoning of your own: Since to owe a Life to that Cause, would make it not only uneasy but insupportable to me, and consequently incapable of lasting. So that enjoining me to survive you, would condemn me to a Life, which after the loss of yours, must be spent, if it could last, in fruitless deploring that Loss. Forbear therefore, concludes he, I most earnestly beseech

beseech you Madam, to exact such proofs of my Obedience, that 'tis as little in my power to give you, as it ought to be in your will to require them ; since for *Didymus* to survive *Theodora*, is as great an impossibility, as it would be an unhappiness. O admirable Contest ! where the noble Antagonists did not strive for Victory, but Death, or endeavour'd to overcome each other, that the Victor might perish for the Vanquish'd : Where Self-love, the most radical affection of human Nature, is sacrific'd to a Love, equally chaste and disinterest'd : And where Vertue makes each of the Contenders, ingeniously Solicitous to appear Criminal, that the Antagonist may be treated as innocent. How well does this proceeding prove that inspir'd Sentence true, that *Love is Stronger than Death*, since in this Conflict, the generous Friends, are by the former, made Rivals for the latter ?

CHAP. VIII.

THE afflicted Virgin, to whom these moving things were said, finding that she should but lose her disquisitions on *Didymus*, thought fit to address herself once more, to the *President*; and with humble Gestures, accompany'd with Looks, and with a Voice, that would have soften'd any that were not invincibly Obdurate, she told him; Though Sir, the Arguments us'd by this Gentleman, had far better prov'd than they have, that, of us two, he is the fittest person to be condemn'd; yet I hope, where you Preside with so much Authority, he will not fare the worse for being generous; and that what he has done, will be more prevalent with you, than what he has said. Ever since he was capable of bearing Arms, he employ'd them in the service of the Emperors; and in their Camps chearfully follow'd the *Roman* Eagles, wherever they durst fly: And after his having this day hazarded himself so generously, out of compassion to a distress'd Virgin; what examples of gallantry may not be expected from such a Courage, engag'd by his Gratitude, when he shall act
for

for the acquist of Glory, and the Service of his Country? If a guilty intention be necessary to make an action so, his will not be found to be Criminal; since he did not intend the violation of any Law, but to second, what we are told to be, the design of all just Laws; which is, to protect the Innocent, and encourage Vertue. But if by a rigid interpretation of the Law, he may be brought within the reach of it; I hope his Misdemeanor will not appear so great, but that your Clemency may allow him all that I beg for him, which is, that he may be permitted to repair a mistake in the exercise of his vertue, by the continuation of those Services in the *Roman* Army, which will be far more useful to the publick than his death, in his present circumstances, can be. To this *Theodora* would perhaps have added, (though she could scarce have done it, without some reluctance from her modesty) The things, Sir, that he has been pleas'd to act and hazard for me, may persuade you, that if, contrary to my prayers and hopes, you should design severity towards him, you may more sensibly punish him, by my death, than by more immediate inflictions on himself. And 'tis like she would have enforc'd her arguments and intreaties, for a Person for
whom

whom she was so much and so justly concern'd, when the *President*, vex'd to find that both of them so little valu'd Life, whose deprivation was the most formidable thing he could threaten them with, prevented her, by saying, with a stern countenance. No, I will hear no more, having heard but too much already: It does not become a *Roman* Magistrate, to suffer any longer with patience; that Prisoners and Criminals should daringly disobey the Laws, slight all their threats, and glory in their violation. What each of you has said to prove himself guilty, affords abundant reason to condemn you both. Wherefore, since you cannot agree among your selves, I will be your Umpire, and give both of you what each desires and merits. You, Obstinate Maid, says he, turning to *Theodora*, shall dye for having broken Prison. You, Disobedient Soldier, says he to *Didymus*, shall dye for having persuaded and further'd her Escape. But to specify your chiefest Crime, than which there needs no other, nor can be a greater, you both shall dye because you are *Christians*, and consequently Enemies to the *Roman* Emperors, and the Gods that made them so.

This fatal Doom being pronounc'd, the Judge order'd the condemn'd Prisoners
to

to be taken aside, and strongly guarded, till all things were in readiness for their Execution : Which preparatives he gave order to hasten. Yet finding by the discontented looks, and confus'd murmurs, of the bystanders, that the Charms and Innocence of *Theodora*, and the Youth, Courage and Friendship, of both the no less generous than unfortunate Prisoners, made his Sentence be far less lik'd, than were the persons and behavior of those it had pass'd upon ; declar'd, that whilst he was dispatching other publick business, he permitted any that should have Charity enough to make a hopeless Attempt, to endeavour to convert those obstinate miscreants : Adding withal an intimation, that even they might speed in their suit, if they would seasonably, with incense in their hands, flee to the Altars of the Gods, and humbly implore of Them, Pardon and Safety.

This respite, as it expos'd the generous Couple to have their constancy assaulted by Infidels, ambitious of making such illustrious Persons Profelytes, so it gave them the welcom opportunity, of interchanging some discourse with one another.

These Conferences were begun by *Didymus* ; who seeing himself upon the point
of

of final Separation from his admirable Mistress, could not forbear feeling in himself such disorders, as on all other sad occasions, his great Courage had kept him from resenting. And this unusual commotion of mind, was uneasie enough to oblige him to say, to the fair Person that occasion'd it; Though, Madam, the military course of life I have with some forwardness pursu'd, has accustom'd me to meet Death in variety of formidable Shapes and Dresses, without being discompos'd by it; yet when I see the world going to be rob'd of its noblest Ornament, and my self to be depriv'd of the person I most love and admire in it; and when I see this matchless Person ready to be ravi'n'd from us, both in the flow'r of her age, and by the infamous hand of an Executioner; I think it were rather stupidity not to be afflicted, than any weakness to be deeply so.

I was answer'd *Theodora*, so fully satisfy'd before, of your Friendship and Compassion; that this new grief of yours, as 'tis a very needless proof of them, so 'tis a very unwelcome one. For, if I were to allow any thing to grieve me, when I am entering into *the fulness of Joy*, it ought to be, that I find your good nature renders this seemingly distress'd Condition
of

of mine very uneasy to You ; which through Gods assistance, is very little so to me ; and yet will be less so, if congratulating rather than deploring our Martyrdom, you will ease me of the justest and greatest part of my Grief, that consists in being unhappily accessory to yours, and seeing you needlessly troubl'd at mine. That circumstance, adds she, of my death, which I perceive much afflicts you, might in my opinion more justly lessen, than aggravate your Sorrow. For, I look upon it rather as a Favour, than an Infelicity, that I am early remov'd out of the World, where I see, and suffer, and (which is worst of all) do, so much Ill. To be early rescu'd from the Snares of a Dangerous and Persecuting Age, and preserv'd *from the Evil to come*, is rather a Privilege, than a Calamity, to those that are duly sensible, as I desire to be, that one can never arrive unseasonably at Heaven, nor be too early happy. And, in this persuasion (continues *Theodora*,) I am confirm'd by considering, that the First of those who are recorded to have religiously deceas'd, in the old Testament, and in the new, just *Abel*, and *John the Baptist* ; both of them dy'd young, and perish'd by the hands of those that Persecuted them for their Piety. And even that

that spotless Lamb of God *who did no sin*, but by his Satisfaction, Precepts, and Example, *takes away the sin of the World*; was sacrific'd almost in the flow'r of his Age: So little is it an unhappiness, or a mark of Gods disfavour, to escape the toyles and dangers of a troublesome Navigation, by being early, though by a boisterous Wind, blown into the Port. And, if it could become a Woman to encourage a Heroe, I should exhort both you and my self too, generous *Didymus*, (continues she) to entertain our present Condition with Sentiments becoming *Christians*. And, as it does not trouble me directly, so it ought not to trouble you upon the score of sympathy; that I am secur'd from the hazards and inconveniencies of Age: But be pleas'd to make use of that Courage, now at the end of your days, that you have constantly express'd in the course of your life. And, do not, I beseech you, repine, either that you or I, is to fall by the hand of an Executioner. For that seeming, and but seeming Ignominy, was the lot both of our Saviour's immediate Harbinger, and of our Saviour himself. And, when we consider for whom, and for what we suffer; we may find reason enough to assume the sentiments of the Apostles, who, after having
been

been misus'd by the Jewish Council, went
from their presence rejoycing, that
Acts 5. 41. they had been thought worthy to
Suffer for His name ; for whom
 we are going to suffer and the like things.
 For, *Didymus*, Gods gracious Providence
 has not left us to perish, by ling'ring or
 tormenting Sickness, or troublesom Old
 Age ; nor yet for some common Cause, or
 some unimportant End. But all in our
 fate is noble: And what to others is meer
 Death, a debt due to Nature, or the pu-
 nishment of Sin, to us is Martyrdom, the
 noblest act of Christianity, and shortest
 way to Everlasting Glory.

A Discourse that relish'd so much more
 of a Martyr than of a Virgin, gave *Didy-
 mus* a rise to continue a Conversation, by
 which he found himself as well assisted, as
 charm'd ; and therefore observing the se-
 renity of his Mistresses looks, to be little
 inferiour to the beauty of her face, and
 remembering what instances she had that
 day given of an altogether extraordinary
 Piety and Courage ; was, by the senti-
 ments these reflections produc'd in him,
 prompted to tell her : I should be justly
 inconsolable, Madam, to see my self and
 the world, upon the point of being de-
 priv'd of so admirable a Person, as *Theo-
 dora* has, by this days various Tryals, ma-
 nifested

nifested Her self to be; if I were not confident, that my Loss will be as short as great; and that in the State we are now entring upon, I shall be allow'd what approaching Death will deny me in this, and shall find in Heaven the endearing happiness of conversing with Her more freely, than our Persecutions and Her Reservedness would here permit. For Madam, (continues He) I am Friend enough to my own Felicity, to believe assuredly, that those who shall be happy enough to meet in Heaven, will know one another there, and have their joys hightned by the remembrance of what past between them upon Earth. For in the blest State we are hastening to, our Faculties, and consequently our memory, will not only be gratify'd with Suitable Objects, but be improv'd by enlarg'd Capacities. And even in a condition short of that we this day expect; mens knowledge has been advanc'd, at least as much as is necessary for our knowing one another, without the helps that are ordinarily requisite to make us do so. As soon as ever *Adam* saw *Eve*, he could confidently say of her, that *she was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*. When *Noah* awak'd from his Sleep, he could tell that during his sleep, his younger Son had behav'd himself irreverently

rently towards him. When our *Saviour* was transfigur'd on *M. Tabour*, the three chos'n disciples that attended *Mat. 11. 4.* him presently knew *Moses* and *Luk. 9. 31.* *Elias*, whom they had never seen before, in spite of the Disguise that the Glory they appear'd in put upon them. *St. Paul* tells his *1 Thes. 2.* *Thessalonians*, they shall be his joy and crown, before their common Lord at his appearing: To the truth of which it seems requisite, that both the Preachers and the Converts shall be quickly known at that great appearance, and *Assembly of the first born, whose names are written in Heaven*; and consequently, that men there shall know one another. Our Divine Redeemer, continues *Didymus*, teaches us, that there is Joy in the presence of the holy Angels over a repenting Sinner; which argues, that whether they know of his Conversion in a more intuitive way, or by the information of those Angels, that are sometimes sent to this lower world about human affairs, they yet have a knowledge of particular persons, and take notice of particular things that concern them. And, which makes exceedingly for my present purpose, he else where introduces *Abraham* in *Paradise*, calling

calling upon the uncharitable Rich Man, to remember what his own and *Lazarus's* differing States had been upon Earth: and, which is yet more, to shew, that even in the place of utter Darkneſs and Torment, the Memory of paſt things and perſons is not obliterated; the Rich Man is introduced, as remembering not only *Lazarus*, but his own five Brothers, and their dangerous Condition.

The pauſe that *Didymus* made, after theſe words, invited *Theodora* to tell him: Since, generous *Didymus*, I have obſerv'd our ſoundeſt Teachers to be of differing opinions about the Subject of your Diſcourſe, and that they do not look upon it as an Article of Faith, either that the Bleſſed do, or that they do not, know one another in Heaven; I preſume I may be allow'd to think, that if they do (which I know is the moſt receiv'd Opinion) they do it in likelihood with other ſentiments than we commonly imagine. For, when the beloved Diſciple teaches, that, though we be here the Children of God, it does not yet appear what we ſhall be; and adds only in general, that, when our Saviour, or that Bleſſ'd State, ſhall be manifeſted, we ſhall be like Him: When, I ſay, I reflect on this, and ſome things of the ſame import; I am prone to fear, that we judge too much
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of our future glorious State, by wrong measures, taken from our present frail and mean Condition. And I am apt to think, that we must stay till we come to Heaven, before we shall frame *Ideas* suitable to the Prerogatives of its Bless'd Inhabitants. I think our Notions will then be rais'd, as well as our Dust, and our Love, and other Affections, will be transfigur'd, as well as our Bodies. If we know one another, though our mutual Love may perhaps be greater than it ever was on Earth, yet it will not be upon the former Accounts; but will be as well better grounded, as better regulated. That external Beauty, pursues the fair Speaker, that here is so much doted on and over-valued, will there be found so much inferior to that of every Glorify'd Body, that the difference and degrees of it will be very inconsiderable, and unable to make differing impressions on those that shall remember them: As the refulgent splendor of the Sun obscures all the Stars, and keeps our eyes from being any more affected by the greatest and brightest, than by any of the rest. So that our kindness to one another will be very little grounded upon External Qualities, which will there affect us far less, than our being nearly related to our common Lord; our
resemblance

reſemblance to whom will be the chief, as well as juſteſt Ground of our mutual eſteem and affection. When Children of the ſame Parents have been early parted, and long bred in diſtant places ; though when they are grown men and women, they chance to meet again, 'tis obſerv'd, that at firſt they know not one another any more than meer ſtrangers : and when they are inform'd of their Relation, 'tis not the little accidents that happen'd to them at play ; nor ſome features, that perhaps pleas'd one of them in the others Face, but are now very much chang'd by Time and Growth ; that produce their new kindneſs ; but the knowledge that they are Children of the ſame Father, and their finding in each other perſonal qualities, fit to adorn their preſent State, and thereby to challenge kindneſs and eſteem. And if ſome years abſence can produce ſo great a Change, as to make our neareſt Relations unknowable by us ; and make us look with pity, on the fondneſſes that trifles produc'd in us in our infancy : What Changes, may we think, muſt be made on thoſe that convers'd together upon Earth, when after numerous ages, they ſhall meet in Heaven, with minds as much chang'd and improv'd as their bodies will then be ?

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Shall we not by the grounds of a virtuous Complacency, be more affected and united, than we are now by natural Relations, or by external Beauty; and those other trifles that here produce the greatest Fondnesses.

But *Theodora* (answers the surpriz'd *Didymus*) can you be so rigid as to think, that pure and virtuous Affections cannot be admitted into Heaven; since the Scripture informs us, that not only Joy and Desire are to be found even among the Angels, (who are said to rejoyce at a sinner's Conversion, and desire to pry into the Mysteries of our Religion) but Care and Actings for opposite Ends; (as when the Angel of *Persia* withstood *Dan. 10. 13.* *Michael*, and the Angel that talk'd to *Daniel*.)

I do not absolutely deny, *Theodora* replies, that the Blessed know one another in Heaven. And, says she, with a light change of colour, I am so far inclin'd to believe it is true. as, for *Didymus's* sake, to wish it so. But, as I lately told you, I am not apt to think, the Sentiments occasion'd by that knowledge, will be such as most men imagine. Besides those Reasons that you have ingeniously laid together, I think your persuasion of the Saints mutual knowledge the more probable, because

cause it seems not readily conceivable, how at the great Day of Judgment, the Justice of God, in rewarding and punishing particular Vertues and Crimes, can be manifested to the world, without discovering the Persons by whom they were perform'd : Since Personal Circumstances do very much alter the nature of moral Actions. And since the happy residents in heav'n, will have an eternity allow'd them to converse with one another in ; it seems highly probable, that in their various Conferences, they will meet with, at least sometime or other, occasions, that by less sagacity then their enlightned minds will then be endow'd with, may be improv'd to the discovery of the Persons they were formerly acquainted with. But on the other side (continues *Theodora*) we shall have such noble and charming Entertainments to employ our attention, as will engross it from the little and despicable Objects, (as we shall then think them) that now amuse or busie us ; as when we behold such a pompous Solemnity as a *Roman* Triumph, the variety of splendid and magnificent Objects, that Successively present themselves to our view, make us so intent upon those surprizing Spectacles, that even the nearest and dearest Relations, though perhaps gazing at the same

Sight, out of the same windows, are apt to forget one another. And (continues she) even when the Saints actually know and remember one another, they may love and converse, upon terms very differing from those, that were suitable to their mortal Condition. Yes, *Didynas*, (adds she) As there will be no such difference of Ages and Sexes, in Heaven, as there are on Earth; since all shall there be like the *Angels*, and have *Bodies conform'd to the Glorious Body of their Redeemer*: So, the Rational Friendships, that will be practis'd in that happy Place, will receive their measures from the new and personal Excellencies of the Friends; from their being Rivals in the love of God; and from their differing degrees of resemblance to Him, that is the *Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of His Person*. But, concludes *Theodora*, we need not spend more time in discoursing conjecturally about Questions, wherein the Change, we are now going to make, will soon bring us to be resolv'd. And in the mean time, we may well rest satisfy'd, with this assurance, That, since Heaven is a Place, or State, where we shall be Bless'd with the *Fulness of Joy*; to know and converse with each other, will be there found, either a part of
our

our Felicity, or not necessary to it.

CHAP. IX.

VVHilst *Didymus* and his excellent Mistress, stood waiting, till the infamous Ministers of the *Presidents* Cruelty, had prepar'd all things requisite to the Execution of his barbarous Sentence; among those many *Roman* Soldiers that were assembled there, to be spectators of the approaching Tragedy, an Officer, whom his own Gallantry had strongly inclin'd so sympathize with a Person, in whom he saw that Quality so Eminent, thought himself oblig'd to attempt the diswading him, from persisting in so fatal a Resolution as he had taken. Wherefore, approaching our Martyr, with very obliging looks and gestures, and drawing him aside, The Gods, says he, can bear me witness, generous Youth, that 'tis not without some amazement, and more trouble, than any affliction of my own has been wont to give me, that I see the Possessor of so much Gallantry, upon the point to be destroy'd by an unhappy Constancy, which, though in other cases a virtue, must, being exercis'd against the Gods,

become a Crime. And therefore, I cannot but ardently wish, that after having shewn so much Patience and Courage, you would at length express your Prudence too, by letting your self be persuaded to a Compliance, that may rescue you at once from Impiety and from Death.

An advice, answers *Didymus*, that is propos'd with so much kindness and civility, and yet press'd but by such unsatisfying Reasons, does justly deserve my thanks for it, but not my compliance with it. For the Argument you bring against my Constancy to the Truth, is only, that my persisting in it will cost me my Life; which is a proof indeed, that the Religion I profess, will lead me into Danger, but none at all, that it has misled me into Error.

'Tis altogether extrinsick and accidental to a Religions being true or false, that its Embracers happen to be encourag'd by Preferments, or expos'd to Persecutions. Fear is but an ill Counsellor in matters of Religion, unless it be the fear of chusing a bad one, or living unworthy of a good one. He deserves not the Blessing of having made a good choice among Religions, that does more seek in his choice, the Concernments of his

his Life, than of his Soul. And as 'tis only for its being the true one, that we should make choice of our Religion: So having once chosen it, nothing should make us desert it, but a conviction of its being erroneous, and consequently of its wanting that Truth, whose appearance made us embrace it. If therefore, you can shew me, that the *Christian* Religion is false, or that yours is better; I am not so in love with wandring, as to go on in a wrong way, because I once have, by weakness or misfortune, been misled into it. But if your Arguments be but menaces, or any thing that is of that sort, which can only manifest, that the power is on your side, but do not at all evince, that the truth is not on mine; I must look upon what you urge, as not deserving to be comply'd with, but contemn'd. And if it were not my custom never to take any thing ill, that I think is meant well, I should esteem my self not a little injur'd, by the argument you employ to make me abandon Christianity. Since, if a person less civil and gallant had made use of it, I should conclude, that he must suppose me a Coward, to hope, by such perswasions to make a Profelyte. And though I were less assur'd than I am, of the Truth of the Re-

ligion I have always own'd ; yet would I not for all the world, on this occasion, by professing yours, desert it: Least by forsaking it, when I am threaten'd for sticking to it ; I should procur my self a disquieting temptation to suspect, that I did not deal sincerely and impartially in chusing a Religion ; since I made choice of one, that I judg'd not worthy to be dy'd for.

You mistake my intentions, Generous *Didymus*, replies the *Roman*, if you think I pretended to fright you into Apostacy: my Vertue would as little allow me to have so unworthy a design, as your Courage would permit a hope, that it should be succesful. But looking upon my self, as having made a right choice in that worship of the Gods, I make profession of, I could not think it injurious to you, to perswade you, rather to Live in the profession of a true Religion, than to Dye for that of a false one. And since my concerns for your safety, and the little time you have to deliberate, oblige me to speak freely to you ; I cannot but wonder, that a Person that hath courted Honour at the rate you have done, should lose himself, for One, whom the most Sacred Persons of his own Nation, crucified as a Malefactor ; and who has been so

ill natur'd, as to invite his Followers, both by express words, and by the nature of the Religion he fram'd, which could not but be Persecuted, to involve themselves with him in the like unhappy fate.

The Notions (replies *Didymus*, somewhat nettled at this Discourse) that Idolaters frame to themselves, of the nature of the Christian Religion, are commonly as erroneous, as the ways they take to confute it, are improper, and inhumane: And they are usually no less misinform'd about the Grounds and Mysteries of our Religion, than they are mistaken about the Objects of their own Adorations. 'Tis true, that the Divine Person I adore, being sent from God his Father, to be the great Prophet and Reformer of the World, did, with a Prophetick Freedom, as well as Authority, sharply rebuke the Superstitions of the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees, among whom he convers'd; and did not more unmask their Hypocrisie, and reproach their Practices, by the Light of his Doctrine, than by the shining actions of a most exemplary and unblemish'd Life. And his Holiness having exasperated these impious Hypocrites, that found their Authority undermin'd, and their Persons discredited

by him: As their malice was, too great, not to attempt the Destruction of such an Enemy; so his Constancy was too great, to suffer him to decline the greatest dangers, by declining to persist in the wonted exercise of his Vertues; whereby he thus became expos'd to a Death, which he foresaw, and frequently foretold, and which he also willingly underwent, to procure Everlasting Life, for those who should believe in him, and strive to imitate him.

And that his Death, whereunto he submitted to expiate the sins of *others*, was not inflicted on him for his *own*, was evident, by his being absolv'd, not only by the very Judge, to whom a Criminal fear of his Accusers indicted the Sentence he pronounc'd against him, but by that Supreme and Infallible Judge, *God himself*; who declar'd by astonishing Prodigies, both in Heaven and Earth, how much he was displeas'd with those, that put his Son to Death; and by raising him from the Dead within three days, to an Immortal Life, proclaim'd how dear he was to him, and gave him Power, to make his Followers Partakers of that glorious condition he himself was advanc'd to. So that (continues *Didymus*) those Champions of his, whom he vouchsafes

saves to single out from the rest of his Followers, and call to Martyrdom, have reason enough to look upon that Call, as an invaluable Honour, and a Privilege : Since, as they are thereby made more conformable to him, in chearfully dying for Truth and Constancy ; so they will be made more plentiful sharers in those inestimable advantages, that his own meritorious Martyrdom procur'd him. Yes, for those to whom he vouchsafes the Power and Honour of Suffering for Him, and of imitating him, for the interest of Truth and Piety ; he does not only reserve such future Recompences, to crown their Love and Fidelity, but often gives them here such happy foretastes, in a perfect assurance of it, that I cannot but look upon it, as a vast accession to that immense Love, that made him dye for us, that he calls and enables us to dye for him.

I confess (*Didymus* adds in pursuit of his Discourse) that, as he took upon him the form of a Man, so he suffer'd himself to be us'd as good Men too often are. But his miraculous power and goodness, sufficiently proclaim'd, that he was not thrown down from Heaven to Earth, as your Vulcan is said to have been, but that he descended from Heaven, to make
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Men live an heavenly life: Nor did he, like many of your Deities, especially your *Jupiter*, assume an humane shape, to do actions below the dignity of humane Nature; but he taught Men a Doctrine, worthy, as well as likely, to be brought from Heaven; and gave them an exemplary life, whose imitation would fit them to be translated thither: And then submitted to the Torments and Infamy of the Cross, to purchase for his followers, by his Death, that heavenly condition, for which he had qualified them, by his Spirit and his Life.

The *Roman* Officer, not yet quite discourag'd, by the unsuccessfulness he had hitherto met with in his attempt, resolv'd to prosecute it yet further, by saying: The same reason, that somewhat lessens my wonder at your despising Death, for your erroneous Religion, encreases my admiration at your unconcernedness, to avoid the kind of Death that threatens your obstinacy. For though the love of glory, may invite a gallant Man, like *Didymus*, to part with his life for the attainment of it; yet that same heroick passion, ought to make those it possesses, more apprehensive than others of those Extremities, wherein Death is; accompany'd with Infamy, and made
justly

justly terrible with ignominious Circumstances ; of which, none can be more disgraceful, than the receiving it at the base hand of a common Executioner.

The Weakness and Examples of your Gods (replies *Didymus*) have too much seduced you, to make Estimates of Good and Evil, by those popular and pitiful measures, that I cannot but think very unworthy to be acquiesc'd in by a Christian ; who, to merit that Title, must be somewhat more than an ordinary Man. We judge of good and evil Actions, by the Laws of God, and right Reason, not by those of Men in Power. And therefore do not think, that Constancy ceases to be a Vertue, and consequently an honourable, not a disgraceful quality, because legal Tyrants will call it Obstinacy, and condemn Men for it, to the same Punishments that are allotted to dishonourable Actions. The respect our Religion commands us to pay to a Civil Magistrate, though a Persecutor, permits us not by force to resist his unjust Sentences. But this Submission of ours, does not at all keep his Sentences from being unjust, nor forbid us to think them so ; and consequently leaves us the inestimable satisfaction of our Consciences, that inwardly absolve us, when outward Judges condemn.

demn us. And for proof of this, you cannot but have taken notice, that, whereas truly Criminal Persons being conscious of their own Guilt, either deny what they are accused of, or endeavour by all means, to palliate it, and to avoid the being condemn'd for it. We Christians, on the contrary, do not only Confess what you call a Crime, but Glory in It; and do not deprecate the fate, that attends our Constancy. Nor can it fright us from undergoing Death, for a glorious Cause, that we must receive it from an Infamous Hand. For that by which we estimate, it is, the quality of the action that procures it, not the condition of him that is employ'd to inflict it: And, so we can consider with joy, *for what*, we are not much troubled to see, *by whom*, it is that we suffer; being satisfied, that the Executioners hand may destroy a Malefactor, but cannot make one; and if the Cause that brings a Man to the Scaffold, be not culpable, the place cannot make the Death that is there suffered, infamous: Nay, and if Vertue leads him thither, the Instruments of his Death, cannot keep it from being Glorious; since this demonstrates the Sufferers unshaken Constancy to be insuperable, not only by Death, but by that which many have
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embrac'd Death to shun, the Contempt of the generality of Men. Your gallant Roman Commander (*Attilius Regulus*) is much less remembred and celebrated, for all his Military Exploits and Attempts, than for the Cruel Death he suffer'd, by order of the *Carthaginians*, to whom, in performance of a Promise, he yielded himself up, with expectation of some such barbarous Usage as he met with. And sure, as a submission to Indignities, was a duty not meanly glorious in him, to shun the breaking of his Word to his Enemies; the like resignation of themselves, will not, by unbiass'd Judges, be thought an Action dishonourable in Christians, to prevent the violation of their Faith, solemnly given, not to a Savage Enemy, but to a Divine Friend, who has already, without any obligation to do it, suffered more shame for them, than the sublimity of his condition leaves it possible for them to suffer for him. And though that Greek Philosopher, *Socrates*, whom your own Oracles, with more of Truth than they are wont to be guilty of, pronounc'd the wisest of Men, was by his own Fellow-Citizens condemn'd to die by Poyson, brought him by the hand of an Executioner: Yet, since that Sentence was not occasioned by his Crimes,
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but his Vertues, the deadly draught did not destroy his Fame with his Life ; and poyson'd not his Reputation, which is extremely heightned, but that of his Accusers, and his Judges ; whom after Ages have look'd upon, as worse Criminals than ever they Condemed, and more unworthy Persons, than those they employed to execute their Sentence. And for my part (continues *Didymus*) some passages of our sacred Records encourage me to expect, that, if a Posthume Fame be such a Blessing, as many imagine, the Indignities we suffer now, will hereafter procure it us. For I cannot but hope, and methinks I foresee, that the *Roman* Eagles will one day stoop to the Cross of Christ : And the Temples of your False Deities, will be consecrated to the Service of the True God. The Sword of the Civil Magistrate, which is now the great and only successful Argument on your side, will be then in Christian hands, which I wish may never employ it against your Religion, whose ruine will not require the active opposition of Power, but the bare withdrawing of it preserving Support. And then posterity, more enlightned and more just, will read the History of those Destroyers of the Baptized (which

(which is, at least, the innocenter)
part of Mankind, with the same re-
sentments, with which they will read
the havocks made by Wars, Plagues,
Massacres, and other publick Calami-
ties

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

THese Replies of *Didymus* made an end of convincing the Person, that occasion'd them, that our Martyrs resolution was not to be shaken, either by threats or perswasions.

But yet the officious *Roman*, cherishing some hope, that, if *Didymus* should see his Mistress ready to be kill'd by an infamous hand; that Beauty, which had conquered his heart, would soften it, and thereby make it capable of relenting impressions: thought fit to make him one address more, and tell him; It is not without extreme regret, that I see your inflexible obstinacy defeat all my endeavours to procur your safety. But though your mistaken gallantry, may make you think it unhandfom in a Soldier, to disclaim a threatned opinion, that he once adher'd to, lest the change should be imputed to Fear or Levity; yet I hope you will not think, that the strict rules of that destructive Gallantry, ought to oblige a young Lady, in whose Sex, Courage is, at least, an unrequir'd, if not an altogether improper, Virtue. And therefore, I hope you will not refuse

fuse to second my Endeavours, to persuade her, not to throw herself out of a World, of whose grandeurs and pleasures, her transcendent Beauty promises her an extraordinary share, as well as her Youth fits her to relish them perfectly, and enjoy them long.

Didymus, though at first somewhat surpriz'd at this motion, took no long time to return answer, by saying, I confess, I cannot partake of the trouble you are pleas'd to express, for the not prevailing of your Endeavours to alter my Resolutions. For though the advise you press'd upon me, was obliging in you to give, yet it would have been Criminal for me to take it.

And as for what you propose, in reference to *Theodora*, I must desire to be excus'd from making my self accessory to your design of tempting her. For, in my opinion, he that solicites another, to what he believeth a Crime, doth become guilty of one ; so that, as to what concerns *Theodora*, without being at all sure of shaking her Vertue, I should most certainly ruine my own innocence. Yet I cannot think (says the *Roman*, interrupting him,) but if you would enforce my persuasions with yours, the Interest you have in her, would prevail to make her rather

rather accept of Life, than deny a Person, that she owes so much to; and does not less highly, than justly, value.

If (replies *Didymus*) I should yield to use so Criminal means, as to give her an Example of the Apostacy, you would have me invite her to; the attempt would be less improbable: But for me to persuade her to what I am just going to give a convincing proof, that I believe to be worse than Death; would make her both hate me, and despise me. And to convince you, that such a Motion as you would have me make, would lose me all the share I may have in her good opinion; I will dare to own to you, that if I thought her capable, I say not of endeavouring to seduce me, but of being seduced by me, my esteem of her would alter upon her change: And though I could not deny my wonder to so rare a Master-piece of Nature, as is her visible part; yet there would be a vast difference betwixt a meer admiration of external Beauty, which must become the Trophy of Age or Death, and that high veneration, that I now pay to that admirable Person's intrinsic Worth, and unconquerable Vertue.

Nor should you doubt (continues *Didymus*) of the Entertainment, that such

a Piety as hers, would give such a Motion as you would have me make ; since it would justly give her a higher relentment of *my* solicitations, than of all the importunities of her Heathen *Persecutors*: for these do but advise her to decline Danger, by embracing what they think Truth ; whereas that which you would have me to perswade her to, is, to purchase her safety, by renouncing, what *I*, as well as *She*, know to be Truth : And I doubt not, that such a proceeding would so highly offend her, as to enable her, by a bare Pardon, to acquit herself of those Respects and Services of mine, to which possibly a Person of her goodness vouchsafes some Title to her gratitude.

There is (replies the *Roman*) so great a difference betwixt the case of a resolv'd Soldier, that thinks himself in point of Reputation engag'd not to retreat, and that of a young Lady, from whom no Resoluteness, much less Obstinacy, can be expected, that I must yet think, our joynt perswasions, though unassisted by your Example, would withhold her from Death, now she is near enough to it to see the horrors of it.

Nay (rejoyns *Didymus*) I did not speak what I have been saying about my own averiness,

aversness, that I might hinder you from trying your Fortune, if you think fit, with *Theodora's* Vertue. I do not envy her Constancy (whose successes have been hitherto no fewer than its tryals) the honour of gaining more than one Victory, in one day. But what I have been saying, was, to give you one reason, of my refusing to joyn with you in your propos'd attempt: against which I shall now offer this other reason, that I think it little less than impossible it should succeed. For I thought I had already satisfied you, that as to my interest in *Theodora*, if it were much greater, than you, for want of knowing us both, imagine; so great a misemployment of it, would make me justly forfeit it; and persuasions that would seduce her to Apostacy, instead of making her follow the Advice, would make her but detest the Adviser. And as to the hopes, you ground on her seeing herself upon the point of passing out of the World; let me tell you, that the severe Exercises, to which her strict Piety hath long accustomed her, have so disengaged her affections from temporal things, that being already mortified to the pleasures and vanities of the World, Death can now do no more, but free her from the troubles and persecutions of it.

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She hath employed a great part of her life, in preparing herself to part with it joyfully, when-ever Nature or Vertue shall require it; and she will find it very easie to lay it down for Religion, now she is in a suffering Condition, when in her most flourishing one; she found it enough to wean her from the love of the present life, that it detained her from the next. Great Vertues, such as hers, are like great Rivers, which, the nearer they come to the Sea, where they are to end their course, the greater they are wont to grow, and the more difficult the stream is to be withstood or hinder'd from its progress. *Theodora* now looks upon herself, as having but one step more to make, to reach that Crown she hath done and suffer'd so much for: And that glorious Object, viewed at so near a distance, so ravishes and so possesses her Eyes, that she will doubtless either not see, or not regard, any thing that would hinder or retard her taking possession of it.

Here the *Roman* Officer, somewhat impatient at *Didymus's* Discourse, would no longer forbear interrupting it, by telling him; To hear you speak, one would imagine, that you are not talking of a young Lady, but of some ancient Heroe, that had been long accustom'd to despise
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the Frowns of Fortune, and keep himself from over-valuing her smiles.

Heroick Vertue (replies *Didymus*) does as little know Sexes, as doth the Soul wherein it properly resides. A habitude cannot always be Essential to the Nature of an Heroick Action : Since the first of that kind that one does, is not the consequent, but the beginning, of a habitude : And a sincere and settled resolution to be highly vertuous, may make a Woman (as well as a Man) to *be*, that which the noblest subsequent Actions can but declare her to *have been*. And a Person that, like *Theodora*, acts by the assistance, and as in the presence, of the Deity, may, to maintain her Loyalty to God, and her Title to the inestimable Rewards he hath promis'd to persevering Piety, both act and suffer greater things, than those very Heroes you talk of were put upon, by such barely human Motives, as Custom, Ambition, or Revenge. And particularly, as to the point of perseverance against Menaces, and Proffers; these are not like to prevail against the Constancy of Christians much less possess'd with Divine Love and Hope, than *Theodora* is. And indeed, there can be nothing upon Earth capable to bribe them, to let go the Joys of Heaven, that
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see themselves entring upon the Possession, and find themselves sensible of the inestimable Value of them.

Wherefore (concludes *Didymus*) you will not, I presume, think it strange, that I refuse to joyn with you, in a Design, that I could not so much as attempt, either with Hope, or without a Crime; and that thinking it worthier of my Endeavors, to imitate *Theodora's* Constancy, than to seduce her from it, I chuse rather to be a sharer in the Triumphs of her Vertue, than a Trophy.

C H A P.

CHAP. XI.

THis resolute Conclusion, oblig'd the Roman Officer to break off a Conversation, whereby he plainly saw, there was no cause to hope he could shake the Constancy of *Didymus*; and much cause to fear that *Didymus's* Constancy and his Discourses, would stagger many of the Heathen Auditors. And therefore withdrawing himself, much discontented at the unsuccessfulness of his perswasions, he thought it would be impious, to make any intercession, for Persons he judg'd invincibly obstinate, or divert the fatal Proceedings of the Judge; who having by this time made an end of those other Affairs, whose dispatch *Theodora's* respite was not to outlast; call'd for the innocent Criminals, and, with a stern Countenance and Voice, demanded, whether they were yet willing, to appease the Deities they had provok'd; and by burning Incense to them, endeavour to atone for the Affronts they had offer'd them. Adding, that there was now no more time left for deliberating, but that they must immediately renounce their Impious Religion, or suffer Death for it.

But

But this could not shake the illustrious Prisoners Constancy; which prompted them to make, with as much haste as the *President* could desire, an answer, that consisted but of a short and resolute declaration; That they had liv'd Worshippers of Christ; and had a thousand times rather die, than cease to be, or to profess themselves such: And that for the false Gods, the *President* would have them adore; they had rather be their Victims, than their Suppliants; and fall Sacrifices to them, than offer them any.

This bold profession, so incens'd the person 'twas made to, that he immediately gave order, that the Prisoners should be led away to the place of Execution; and that the Ministers of Justice (as he misnamed his Cruelty) should, without delay, go on with the preparations that were making, to destroy them. But while these Officers were solicitous to obey those Commands, *Theadora* took the opportunity, to tell the generous Companion of her Sufferings: It was fit, I confess, when we discours'd with Infidels, to recommend the Objects of our hopes, by giving them the glorious Titles of Crowns and Triumphs; since being to defend the reasonableness of our

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Constancy,

Constancy, by the greatness of the rewards we expect for it; 'twas very proper to represent those Cœlestial Recompences, under the notion of such Goods, as those we argued with, acknowledged to be the most noble and desirable. But, (continues she) when we speak of Heaven among our selves, give me leave to tell you, that I think we should look upon it under a very differing notion; and make a wide disparity betwixt the Christians *Paradise*, and the Poets *Elysium*. The Triumphs we should most desire in Heaven, should be, not over our outward Enemies, or personal Sufferings, but over Sin and Ignorance, and the frailties of our Natures, and the imperfections of our Vertues. And the positive Blessings that should most endear Heaven to us, should be, not so much that we shall there be Crown'd by *Christ*, as as that we shall live with him, and follow that spotless Lamb where ever he goes; That our gratitude it self shall be perfect, as well as the Blessings that engage it shall be compleat; and that we shall have an eternal Day, to contemplate that *Sun of Righteousness*, without having that glorious Object veil'd by any interposing Cloud, much less hid from us by the vicissitudes

vicissitudes of day and night. In short, I think, Devotion should in our future State, aspire to other things, than those that may be the Objects of meer Ambition.

And now, generous *Didymus* (adds *Theodora* since we are entering upon the last Scene of our mortal Life; let us (I beseech you summon together and rouse up all the Graces and Vertues we have receiv'd from Heaven and fervently implore both an encrease of them, and a supply of any that our present Circumstances require; That we may go off the Stage Piously, as well as Handsomly, and both act and suffer as becomes Christian Martyrs. Let not any Cruelties or Affronts of our insulting Persecutors, be able to discompose us; but let our evenness of mind convince them, that they can as little disorder us in our way to Heaven, as hinder us to get to our Journey's end. But let not our undauntedness appear the effect of sullenness, or fierceness, or of meer resolvedness; but let it be so calm and charitable, that we may not be suspected to be the Martyrs, rather of our Glory, or our Courage, than of our Religion. Let it not be thought that we hate life, or despise it, but only that we think it a

cheap purchase for Heaven, and for the honour of owning and following a Redeemer, who, to merit it for us, took the Cross in his way thither.

Admonitions so becoming a dying Christian, receiv'd such an entertainment, as the Piety of it, and the Veneration he had for the giver, might justly challenge, from so devout and elevated a Soul as that of *Didymus*: whose resolute answers to the *Roman* Officer, together with his behaviour, as well since as before he made them, leaving his Enemies no more expectation that he could be prevail'd with, either to alter his own resolution, or tempt his Mistress to change hers; he was appointed to be first led away to Execution: that the sight of his Blood might terrifie *Theodora*, and fright her into a care to preserve her own. This resolution of his Enemies, did not at all lessen his; but having easily obtain'd leave, from the *Roman* Officers, that could not but admire his Gallantry, and somewhat compassionate his condition, to say a few words to *Theodora*: He went to that Excellent Person; and approaching her with a far greater respect, than he would shew to any Power, that could but preserve that life, which the *Romans* were going to take from

from him: He told her: Your Piety, Madam, and your Example, making me presume, that upon such an occasion as this, I may with your consent, part with a life, which ever since I had the Fate to see you, has been so much at your disposal; I am now going without reluctance to perform that last duty, whereto Religion calls me. But thinking my self oblig'd, to begin with the most difficult part of my Martyrdom, before I bid farewell to the World, my inclination and respect, brings me to take my last leave of the fairest and excellent Person in it. If, Madam, (so he proceeds) I were in a condition of paying you any further duties, my humble request to you would be, to have the honour of your further Commands. But since my condition leaves me not a capacity of serving you for the future, one of my last Petitions to you must be, to be pleas'd to look upon my past Services, as extremely short of the desires of a Person, that lov'd you with as much ardency, as your Charms themselves could kindle; and yet with so pure a flame, that had it been visible, even *Theodora's* Vertue, could not have disapprov'd it. But Madam (continues he) although to rescue you from the condition you are in, there is no danger so

desperate that I would not joyfully attempt, if I were again at liberty, and tho' it were possible I could survive you ; yet I am too much concern'd for the nobler part of *Theodora*, to wish, she would blemish so spotless a life to save it. Only, Madam, give me leave to be so kind and Charitable to the World, as to wish that Providence may find some expedient, to preserve for you, both your Crown and your Head ; and that you may arrive so late at Heaven, as to have time to bless the Earth with a long and Exemplary Life ; and may you lead it with as much Tranquility, as you will with Vertue ; and without knowing so much as that trouble, which I fear, your generous compassion may now and then offer to give you, upon the remembrance of the faithfulest of your Servants.

These words, and the sad occasion of them, having drawn some Tears into *Theodora's* fair Eyes ; though the cause of them made them very obliging to *Didymus*, yet his concern for her quiet, presently engag'd him to help her to suppress them, by making hast to tell her, that 'twas pity the serenity of her mind and looks, which Vertue had still kept calm, and even Persecutions had not been able to disorder, should be discompos'd

pos'd by any other thing. And Madam (continues he) though, being confident that your Charity will make it unnecessary for me to beg your Prayers, I was going to make it my petition to you, that you would vouchsafe now and then to cast a thought on the memory of a Person, to whose mind you were constantly present: Yet, I must now retract that humble request, unless you are pleas'd to grant it me with this qualification; That the honour you do me, may not be disquieting to you. For how great a blessing soever it is, to enjoy a place in your thoughts; yet an *Idea* must represent quite another man than *Didymus*, that should, especially on its own score, become troublesome to *Theodora*; whose compassion is as well needless, as undesired; since 'tis injurious both to her self and me, to look upon him as a person to be pitied, that is going to receive the honour and satisfaction, to suffer in her sight, what he suffers partly for her service. And the place he implores but in her favourable not her mournful thoughts, will give him the noblest and desirable Being, that he can have upon Earth, when he shall be in Heaven.

The things which *Didymus* said, and the pathetical way he said them in, did

not leave the fair Person they were address'd to, all the unmov'dness of mind, she us'd to be Mistress of on other occasions. And considering these as the last and dying words of an accomplish'd Gentleman, that had so highly serv'd and lov'd her, she could not hinder her resentments from making her, on such an occasion, remit somewhat of her wonted reserv'dness. Wherefore with Eyes, wherein though she endeavour'd to suppress Tears, she disclos'd an extraordinary Grief; and with Looks, wherein both Gratitude and Obligedness display'd themselves; she told him, If I look'd upon your Vertue, generous *Didymus*, as one that were but somewhat extraordinary, I should think my self oblig'd to make excuses; and seek your pardon for having been, though undesignedly, so accessory to the early loss of a life, so worthy to be a long one. But what you have this day done, makes me apprehend that such Discourses, would not be very pleasing, to one that delights in such Actions. But do not think, I conjure you, that, though I cannot pretend to merit or requite Services of so unusual a strain as yours, I can be insensible, how much I owe to them, not only, upon the score of their greatness, but upon that of the handfom
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and generous way wherein you did them. For (continues she, with a colour that somewhat expounded the meaning of what she was going to say) if after the Vertue and Gallantry you this day express'd, Providence had thought fit to place me in a condition of making you Retributions, I will allow you to think, that in chusing them for you, I should have been very much, if not unreservedly, guided by your wishes. Here she paus'd a while, and blush'd the latter, that she had said, what to her niceness seem'd so much; and the former, to consider whether he deserv'd not to have more said to him. But her obliging looks did so well second and expound, her otherwise, somewhat indefinite words, that *Didymus's* Heart readily understood the Language of her Eyes; and her Heart spoke so clearly in her Cheeks, somewhat that it scrupled to utter by her Tongue, that expressing more than she said, without injuring her Modesty she righted her Gratitude: her passionate Admirer esteeming himself more highly recompenc'd, by this permission, to suppose her kindness than he would have done by the perfectest assurance of any others love: And fancying, that by the sight of that new Fire that flash'd in her Cheeks, he

he could discern in her Breast such a resentment of his Services, as involv'd an approbation of their cause, and imply'd a peculiarity for his Person ; he took the highest retribution he ever did, for the highest he ever could receive from a Lady, whose Beauty and Reservedness were so great, that no favour of her granting, could appear little.

But *Theadora* quickly recovering the disorder, this merited Declaration had put her into, made hast to prosecute her discourse, by adding ; But 'tis my satisfaction, and will I hope, be yours, that, since you acted upon Religions score, as well as mine, you will not want a recompence, greater than it had been possible for me to give you ; since in rescuing me upon a Christian account, you have serv'd a Master, that is able most richly to reward, even *your* Performances and Sufferings : And doubt not *Didymus* (continues she) but that, when you shall once be possess'd of a Glorious and Immortal Crown in Heaven, you will have no cause, to be troubled, at your having, upon Earth, left a Crown of *Lawrel*, or miss'd one of *Myrtle*. If I were to tarry, or rather languish, here below, as many years as your mistaken kindness makes you wish me ; your favours have
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been so extraordinary, that, without being guilty of an ingratitude that would be so too, I could never lose the remembrance of them, nor omit paying you the highest acknowledgments, that the chief place, not only in my memory, but in my esteem and friendship, could make you. But do not *Didymus*, I beseech you, think of my Surviving you, when the holding out a few minutes longer for *Christ*, will introduce me into a Condition, where I shall ever see him, and never offend him. Let us then (concludes she) quit the thoughts of this World, that we are going so soon to quit, and begin to fix them on those joys of another, that we are going to possess for ever; and during that little time, that is requisite to take our Crowns, let us summon up all our powers, to contribute to a behaviour befitting such Expectations. Let our last services to Religion, be our noblest ones, that our Deaths may at least adorn it, if not propagate it. Let us receive the last effects of our Persecution, as persons that do not deserve such an usage, and are above the reach of it. Let us aspire to *Christ's* temper, in his cause; and suffer Like him, as we suffer for him: and then we need not doubt, but, in spite of this short separation we are yielding

yielding to for his Sake, we shall joyfully, and for ever, meet again, in a better place, and in an inestimably happier condition.

Theodora had scarce made an end of speaking, when all things being in a readiness to put the Judges Sentence in Execution, they to whom that infamous employment was committed, came to bring notice of it to *Didymus*, who, notwithstanding the reluctancy he had, to part with the admirable, and now obliging, *Theodora*; thinking it would misbecome him, to stay for being press'd on such an occasion delay'd not, with all the resolution he was able to assume, to take his last farewell of her. This cruel separation, being not to have an end, before both their Lives, was solemniz'd by that excellent pair, with Gestures and Expressions so sensible and moving, that, declining an account, which I could not attempt to give, without sharing very much in a grief, that I should be able, but very imperfectly, to describe; I shall silently pass over the Circumstances of this sad Separation, that more troubled the generous Lover, and perhaps his admirable Mistress too, than that of Soul and Body, which was presently to follow it. But *Didymus*, now finally parted from

from *Theodora*, whilst he was moving towards the place of his Sufferings, did by the assistance of him, whose Religion call'd him to them, assume a temper of mind, suitable to the glorious work he was going to undertake, and entirely dispos'd himself, after having done all that became a Lover, to suffer as became a Christian,

This was much the less difficult for him to do, because his whole past life was an excellent preparative, to make him act the last scene of it worthily. For (to add somewhat on this occasion, to the Character given of him in the first Book.) *Didymus* was a Person, in whom Divine Grace had produc'd so early a Piety, that he was as well grown Christian, before he was come to be full grown Man. And judging the most flourishing time of his Age, to be, for that reason, the fittest to be Devoted to the most worthy of Objects; He was enabl'd both to suppress the hearts of Youth, and despise the Vanities of the World; even while that usually ungovern'd Age, made the former most impetuous, and gave the latter, the great endearment of Novelty. Nor did his being a Soldier, prove an Obstacle of his Piety. The Examples of *Joshua*, *David*, *Jonathan*, and other

other brave Warriors of the *Old Testament*; shew, that Heroick Valour, may be accompany'd with eminent Piety. And the first Profelyte the Heathen World presented to Christianity, being a Captain, and continuing to be so after his Conversion; argues, that a Military State of Life, is not inconsistent with the most innocent of Religions. And for *Didymus*; as he fought not out of Fierceness, or Avarice, or Ambition; but to exercise and improve his Vertue; so amidst all his Military Conflicts, he was still careful *To fight the good fight of Faith*: And being taught by the Holy Scripture, that *The Life of Man here on Earth, is a kind of Military one*: He us'd the *Roman Camp* as a School to a higher sort of Warfare; where, as the hardships are greater, and the Victories more difficult, so the Crowns and Triumphs are incomparably more Valuable and Glorious. A Person thus qualify'd and dispos'd, could not find it very uneasy, *to part*, for his Religion, with a Life that he had led so well, and hazarded so often; nor *to leave* a World, that Sin and Persecutions embitter'd, and that was presently to be left by *Theodora*, that he might pass to a place where they should meet to be Crown'd. Wherefore, resolving to shew that

that the approach of a reputedly infamous Death, was not able, either to shake his Constancy, or extinguish his Charity; he dispos'd himself to mingle in his last Actions and Sufferings, the courage of a *Roman* Soldier, with the resignation of a Christian Martyr. And accordingly, walking on towards the place of Execution, with a calmness and undauntedness, that could scarce have proceeded from a resolution not strengthen'd by Faith; as soon as he came thither, he look'd round about him upon the Guards, and other Assistants of this sad Spectacle, in such a way, as if he rather pity'd them, than lik'd the Pity, which many of them could not but by their Tears express for him, and discours'd to them with all the gracefulness, that Youth and Courage could give so extraordinary a Person. And because he suppos'd, that (as 'twas usual on such occasions of Concourse) there were among the Spectators, some Military Men that were Christians in their Hearts, though they had not been call'd to own it publickly; He address'd himself particularly to them. And having premis'd, that he pretended not to instruct them as barely Christians, because he doubted not, but he had been prevented by the weighty and moving
Sermons.

Sermons of divers burning and shining Lights, and guiders of the Church: He told them, he would confine his advices to what was suitable to the condition he shar'd in with them, of being Christian Soldiers. And then he briefly, but pathetically exhorted them to all those Vertues and Practices, that might recommend both their Persons, their Profession, and their Religion. The last of which, by many Arguments, (which his example made the more Impressive) he perswaded them, after having adorn'd it by their Lives, to confirm, if they were call'd to it, by their Deaths: Without forgetting, that

the Fearful, are by the
Revel. 21. 8. Scripture rank'd with
 the *Unbelievers*, as detain'd to the same place of Torment; and without fearing any unmerited disgrace, so much as that deserved one, threatn'd by the *Captain*

Heb. 11. 10. of their Salvation, to those that shall deny him before
Men. He Exhorted them, by their

Courage and Obsequiousness to convince their unbelieving Superiors; that the valour of Christians could be eminently active, when their Religion did not confine it to be passive; and that
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when Enterprises, how dangerous sooner, were as just and noble as difficult, they could emulate, if not outshine, the Gallantry of those Deify'd Heroes they refus'd to Worship. And lastly, having press'd them to be loyal to the *Emperor*, and obedient too, as far as was consistent with Fidelity to Him that made *him* so: He begg'd their Prayers for himself, and put up ardent ones of his own, for the Church, the State, his Persecutors, and particularly, for the excellent Companion of his Martyrdom. This said; he began to do what was to be done by him, towards the deliverance of his Soul from his Body; and having done it with so much serenity of Mind and Looks, that he extorted an esteem of his vertue, even from those that destroy'd him for it, he let the Executioner do his part too, (which probably, was done by taking off his Head) and in a moment pass'd, from being a suffering Member of the Church Militant, to be a happy one of the Church Triumphant.

CHAP. XII.

THE Persecutors of *Theodora*, hoping to intimidate her by so Tragick a Spectacle, had conducted her to a place, whence she might see all that had pass'd; of which 'twill easily be believ'd that she had not been an unconcern'd Spectator: Her Vertue and Kindness making her a sharer in his Sufferings, by sympathising with him, and by endeavouring, as far as she could, to relieve him by her most ardent Prayers; That his constancy under them might be Divinely Supported, and richly Crown'd. But while her thoughts were, with a Divine grief, Solemnising her loss; those cruel Men that had procur'd it, being desirous to make use of the terrifying impressions they suppos'd she had receiv'd, while they were fresh and recent, advanc'd to *Theodora*, bringing with them the purposely disfigur'd remains of *Didymus*; and then told her, that she was now convinc'd, that neither Youth nor Gallantry was able to protect, from the fatal anger of the Gods, those that obstinately refus'd to Worship them; and therefore they expected, that, by a seasonable care of herself, she would shun

thun the imitation of so Tragical an Example. To this the fair Martyr replied, that she was not at all surpriz'd at what had pass'd, and therefore, she knew not why she should be terrified by it. For *Didymus* and she, and all other considering Christians, that walk according to their Masters directions, were wont deliberately to weigh the consequences of embracing a strict and persecuted Religion, before they made Profession of it: And having foreseen what it might cost them, and satisfied themselves that it deserv'd a yet higher Price; they were not discourag'd nor surpriz'd, to be put to pay that price; especially, when it open'd to them an immediate passage to the possession of what they gave it for. She added, that if the Example of the generous Martyr, were to have any operation upon her, it ought not to fright her from, but confirm her in, the profession of a Religion, whose truth he thought worth dying for; and which, notwithstanding all the handsome concerns he had for her preservation, he would never speak one word to perswade her to decline, for the protracting of her Life. His Example, (continues *Theodora*) lets me see, that no violences upon Earth, are able to destroy a Courage that is assisted from Heaven, and fights

sights in view of the glories of it: And his Death manifests, how quick the passage may be between this and an incomparably better Life, and clearly shews, how soon the utmost effect of your Cruelty, can place those that despise it, above the reach of it. Then casting her mournful Eyes upon the saddest Object that ever they beheld; If you should, says she, be so inhumane, as to exercise any further Cruelty upon this now inanimate Prison, whence his glad Soul has Escap'd; you may intend him a mischief, but he will not feel it, unless it be in the encrease of the recompences of his Martyrdom. You may, if you please, insult over his dead Body; and those whom his vertue made his Friends, may some of them be troubled at it: but while you are triumphing at his Death, and others are deploring it, I doubt not, but the welcomes and joys he receives in the blessed place he is gone to, make him happy enough, to pity not only those that hate him, but those that pity him too. What you shew me as the Trophy of your Power, I look upon, as that of his Constancy: and for what you presume to be Your Victory, He will be really Crown'd. The Grave, (continues she) is, I confess, a sad Prospect, to them that look no further, and terminate their
sight

sight there; but not to those sufferers for the Truth, who, with the Eye of Faith, looking beyond it, see all those Glories on the other side of it, that expect them there; whereunto, as some kind of Death must necessarily be the way, so Martyrdom of all other is the Noblest. Wherefore, (concludes *Theodora*) you will very much miss your aim, if you forbear bringing my constancy to the last Tryal, only upon hopes, that Death dress'd with unusual Horror, by being besmear'd with *Didymus's* Blood, should frighten me into Apostacy: For, I am much less terrified by his Fate, than encouraged by his Example. In imitation of which, I declare to you once for all, that, as I always valued this World too little, to be much afraid to part with it for a better; So I shall never be brought to quit an excellent Religion for a bad one, for fear of exchanging a wretched Life for a happy one.

This positive and final declaration of *Theodora*, did so enrage those to whom she made it, that, finding themselves quite disappointed of the hopes they had, to terrifie her by their last Expedient, *Didymus's* Death; they presently led her away to participate of his Fate, which they found her so resolv'd not to decline.

And

And now the admirable *Theodora*, having receiv'd that cruel, but welcom Command, most readily dispos'd herself to obey it: And considering how near she was to put a period to all the afflictions of her Life, by the gloriousest Action it could be concluded with; and how soon she should enjoy the happiness of entering Heaven, thorough the streightest and noblest Gate at which it is accessible: Her Beauty, that was before admirable appear'd more so than ever, being strangely encreas'd, by the effusions of a Cœlestial Joy, that did too much abound in her heart, not to flash out manifestly in her looks; to whose native Charms, it super-added so much of Luster and Majesty, that she seem'd (upon some peculiar design) to be newly come from the Heaven she was going to. So great a constancy and chearfulness of mind, upon so sad an occasion, wanted not a resembling Operation, upon the generality of the wondering Assistants. For *though* the Report, that was quickly spread of so uncommon an Action, as that of *Theodora*, done by so extraordinary a Person, as Fame had represented her to be; had drawn a great concourse of People, to see one that acted, as well as look'd, so handsomely: Yet when they had a while beheld

held her, and saw the cruel Instruments of what she was doom'd to suffer ; among that numerous Throng of Spectators, there were none that were not Admirers; many that look'd on her with dazled, and few without flowing Eyes. Every sort of Spectators found something in her Person and Condition, that made them mournful Ones. The Christians that chanc'd to mingle with the rest of the Crowd, Lamented, to see their Religion depriv'd of so great an Ornament, and so shining an Example ; though their grief were moderated by considering, that she was entering into a most happy place, to which they might hope, ere long, to follow her. And in the mean time, 'twas no small credit to their Religion, that a Lady of her Beauty, had liv'd according to the strictest Laws of it ; and a Person of her youth and sex, was ambitious to dye for it. Those among the Spectators that yet retain'd *Roman* Spirits, and were the genuine Offspring of those noble Ancestors, that scrupled not in *Rome* it self, to allow publick marks of honour to its greatest Enemies ; could not but be troubled. to see so rare a thing as a Female Hero, punished for a Generosity, that could not sufficiently be Rewarded ; and brought to a
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untimely, and, in popular estimation, Ignominious End, for having followed Dictates of Gratitude and Piety. Those Infidels, on whose sentiments Vertue had more influence than Superstition, were very much dissatisfied with the rigour of their Magistrates; thought it a discredit to their Religion, to use such barbarous, and yet ineffectual Courses, to fright Men into it; and they thought it an invidious service to their Gods, to destroy the fairest Masterpieces they had made. But those that seemed most to deplore the fair Martyrs condition, were those that were dispos'd to have their Affections wrought on by their Eyes, and were apt to be influenc'd by Beauty. For these much repin'd and griev'd, to see so glorious a *Sun* reduc'd to set in her East. They envy'd *Didymus*, for having so generously serv'd and suffer'd for so rare a Person; who, they thought, instead of the barbarous usage she receiv'd, deserv'd to be as happy, as her Smiles could make her Adorers. And they allow'd themselves to think, that nothing could be a Vertue, that depriv'd the World of so much Beauty. In short, most of the By-standers griev'd, to behold a person, whose youth would pass for innocency, and whose charms would
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give her Captives among Savages, destroy'd in *Greece* by *Romans*. So debating those few Barbarians, whose Superstition and Malice brought her to that Condition: All the other Spectators of her Sufferings, were explorers of them too: And many to that degree, that to judge by Their looks, and those of our fair Martyr, one would have believ'd that the Assistants were to be sufferers in the approaching Tragedy, and She but the Spectator of it.

And now the Matchless *Theodora* came to the place, whence her aspiring Soul was to take its flight to Heaven. In order to which, she first look'd about her with a kind of pity, on those that either never, or later than she, were to be admitted into the felicity she was presently to possess: And afterwards she paus'd a while, to recover from some disorder that she was put into; not so much to see her self environ'd with Guards, or surrounded with Gazers: and then, *though* her Bashfulness made it more uneasie to her to speak to the Assistants, because her speech must be a publick one, than because it must be her last; yet with a Voice and Gestures, wherein the Modesty

desty of a Virgin, and the Courage of a Martyr, were happily temper'd, she address'd her self to those that were about her, in such as the following terms.

Since Custom has made it a kind of Duty, that those that come to this place, should say something to the Spectators ; and make a publick Confession of their Guilt, or protestation of their Innocence ; I shall in part do both the one and the other. For I will not deny, that I am, what the Laws have condemn'd me for being. Yes ; I own my self a Christian, and in spite of all my past and approaching sufferings, I declare, that I think it an honour and a happiness to be so. But on the other side, I can most truly protest, that I have transgress'd no other *Roman* Laws, than those that are repugnant to those of God and Reason. And since we Christians are taught by our great Masters Example, as well as Precepts, not only to forgive, but to love our Enemies, and pray for our Persecutors ; I think my self oblig'd, and by his assistance find my self enabled, not only to forgive, as I heartily do, the procurers of my Death, but ardently to implore for them, the Blessing, and the unmolested

unmolested Exercise of a Religion, that they see I value more than I do my Life. And I hope, those in Authority will, by the frequent Executions that daily succeed one another in this place, be at length convinc'd, how ineffectual as well as inhumane, a way they take, to extirpate Christianity: Which being an Heavenly Light, can be as little ruin'd by the Violence employed against it on Earth, as Tempests can Extinguish the *Sun*. And because 'tis likely that Charity or Curiosity has, among other Spectators, brought hither some Christians, I shall now address my self to Them; yet not to desire their Pity, but their Prayers, That I may be enabled to overcome the last Enemy, Death, *and finish my Course*, in such a way, as may neither blemish my past Life, nor the glorious Cause I gladly loose it for. But the chief part of my Request regards your selves, not me. For I must beg you to remember, that, besides an All seeing Eye, there are many other Eyes upon you, that pry into your Actions with strong desires to find them Criminal: And that though the truth, nor the substance of Christianity does not, yet the Credit of it does much, depend upon the Na-

ture of your Actions. For, as all your personal faults will be imputed to your Religion, so your shining Vertues, will probably bring many Infidels first to admire, and then to embrace Christianity; justly concluding, that That Religion must be excellent, that makes its professors so; and enables, as well as enjoins them, to live blameless in the World, and go joyfully out of it. If you lead such lives, you will not be much afraid of Martyrdom; which will but send you sooner to receive those inestimable rewards of them, that Gods goodness hath promis'd and provided. I wish you may never have cause, nor upon occasion want Courage, to enter into Life at that streight Gate, that I am now going to pass through. But if you be call'd to that way of glorifying God, let neither the ignominy, nor the painfulness of it, deter you. 'Tis not shameful, but glorious, to suffer for God, for Truth, and for a Crown; and my Example may encourage the weakest of you to expect, that *Gods strength will be made manifest in your Infirmary*; and that there's no Temptation but may be resisted and vanquished, by the weakest hand, that is supported and strengthen'd by an Almighty Arm. And though the
distance

distance between Heaven and Earth, our Mortal and our Immortal state, be very great ; yet the passage between them may be very short : and a few moments may bring us to exchange our Agonys for Extasies, and pass from the Lamentations of our Friends, and the reproaches of our Persecutors, to the Congratulations of Angels, and the solemn Welcomes of Him, whom even those Heavenly Spirits adore.

As soon as she had ended this Discourse, though her Soul abandoning such a Body as hers, could scarce any where but in Heaven, find an advantage by a change of Mansion ; yet it cheerfully dispos'd it self to a Separation, that would give it a closer and more immediate Union with the Divine Object of its Cœlestial love. And after she had decently and calmly, made all the preparation that on her part was requisite for what she was to suffer, she thought fit to make her Lifes last actions, as most of the rest had been, Acts of Piety, and Charity. And therefore elevating her Eyes and Hands towards Heaven, where her Heart, as well as Her Treasure, had been plac'd long before ; she first paid her God most humble thanks, for the Grace and Opportunity he had vouch-

lav'd her ; *not only to believe in his Divine Son, but to suffer for him ;* and then made a short, but very fervent Prayer, for the Church, for her Enemies ; and for her self. Which done with a Countenance wherein serenity was mingled with joy, she gave a sign to the Executioner to do his Office ; who thereupon did all that was necessary to compleat her Martyrdom. And the glad Soul was by the Angels (whom she had aspir'd to resemble in Purity and Devotion) carry'd to that happy place, whose Glorys are nei-
 1 Cor. 11. 9. ther to be Conceiv'd, by those that have not seen them, nor Describ'd by those that have ; such supernatural Felicities, as much Transcending man's *Ideas* and his Expressions as they surpass his Merit.

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THE

THE
CONTENTS.
Of the
MARTYRDOM
OF
THEODORA
AND
DIDYMUS.

CHAP. I.

Didymus hearing of Theodora's
Captivity and Danger, addres-
ses himself in order to her Rescue,
to a Roman Officer, whose Soldiers
were appointed for her Guard; and
by His Favour and their Assistance,
He

The Contents.

*He is admitted into her Chamber,
under the Notion of one that came
to Ravish Her.*

CHAP. II.

*There he presses her to make an Escape
in his Clothes : She for a good while
scruples to make use of this Expedi-
ent ; and instead of it, proposes that
he would Kill her : (She thinking it
Lawful, as many then did, to die
by anothers hand, and not by her
own.)*

CHAP. III.

*After this obliging contest, she yields
to change Habits with him, and
thus Disguis'd makes an Escape, and
is receiv'd into Irenes House, with
great wonder and joy.*

CHAP.

The Contents.

CHAP. IV.

Irene takes this occasion, to represent to her the extraordinary merits of her Deliverer and Lover. But Theodora, after very kind acknowledgments of them, declares the Resolution she had made against Marriage, and the Reasons that had induc'd her to make it.

CHAP. V.

Theodora hearing what had happen'd to Didymus after her Escape, resolves, though earnestly dissuaded by Irene, to attempt his Rescue.

CHAP. VI.

A Gentleman brings an Account, how Didymus was apprehended, and carried before the Judge: How he own'd and defended what he had done, and his Religion: And how He was Condemn'd in spite of this Defence.

CHAP.

The Contents.

CHAP. VII.

Whilst Didymus is leading away to the place of Execution, Theodora presents herself before the Judge, and begs to have him Releas'd: Offering to undergo the Death, that he was Condemned to, on her Account. She speaks to Didymus, to persuade him to acquiesce in that Proposal: Whereupon grows a long Contest between them before the Judge.

CHAP. VIII.

He Condemns them both to die for being Christians. Divers Discourses pass between them, as they go towards the place of Execution.

CHAP.

The Contents.

CHAP. IX.

A Roman Officer strives to perswade Didymus to change his Religion, by several Arguments: To all which he gives him such resolute Answers, That,

CHAP. X.

The Roman despairing to gain him, endeavours to engage him to perswade Theodora to save her Life; which Didymus refuses to do, for Reasons which includes an Encomium of Her Vertues.

CHAP. XI.

None of their Attempts succeeding, both the Martyrs are commanded to be put to Death, the farewell Speeches that pass betwixt them. Their final Separation; immediately

The Contents.

*ately after which, Didymus is first
Executed.*

CHAP. XII.

*Theodora, being in vain solicited to
shun the like tragical Fate, after
a resolute Answer to her Persecutors,
and a short Speech to the By-standers,
accompany'd with a Prayer for
them ; Receives the Crown of Mar-
tyrdom.*

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CHAP. XII.
F I N I S.

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John Taylor at the Ship in
St. Paul's Church-Yard.

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A Catalogue

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